S.A. EMBLING P. 43

# JIMMY

MAGAZINE OF THE ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS
IN MIDDLE EAST



## CHRISTMAS, 1941.




NUMBER 3



BY ORIGINAL WARRANT




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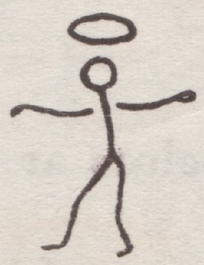



# CHRISTMAS 1941 AT SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL

*Don't come if you don't want to, but you'll have a jolly good time if you do!*

# JIMMY

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS
IN MIDDLE EAST.



**The last thing wanted in a Christmastide issue of a Corps Journal is an Editorial; and even if it were an essential component of the Magazine, which it is not, the Editor has now got himself immersed beneath such an Everestian pile of paper he just has not got the time to write one.**

**So we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Victorious New Year - in which we trust we shall once again be returned to our dear ones.**

**Let us hope that this first Christmas number of "JIMMY" will be the best and also the last and that, next Christmas, we shall be revelling in the joys of London fogs, plum pudding - and real beer!**

# Resolution for the New Year

Let us take a vow that, after victory – as victory it will be – we will pursue with the same determination the victory of peace, and the bounding out of the self-seekers.

Let us pledge ourselves at this time to wage eternal war against the enemies of the individual, whether in country or continent, town or village; let us resolve to make sure that democracy as we understand it, will endure to benefit mankind.

These must be the watchwords for our battle, and the shield and the buckler for our fight to day. For the tomorrow, let us buckle on the armour of courage – to face a new future, and with it the birth of a greater mankind.

MIDDLE EAST
Christmas 1941.

# UNITS OF THE EMPIRE SIGNALS

## S.A. SIGNALS — S.A. SEIN KORPS.

The South African Corps of Signals was formed in 1935. Its composition is volunteer, the Corps being largely made up of personnel from the Active Citizen Forces, an organisation equivalent to the British Territorial Army. In addition, technical and specialist positions have been filled by a considerable number of Post Office personnel who came forward when war appeared imminent.

The organisation is somewhat different to the Royal Corps, companies taking the place of certain sections, but equipment is largely British type, supplemented by certain items of American manufacture. Training in the Union for South African Signals is carried out at POTCHEFSTROOM, where a well equipped Signal School copes with all signal training proper, whilst the radio mechanics undergo instructions at ZONDERWATER.

The remarkable feature of South African Signals is the manner in which an efficient organisation has been built up in such a short time, for it was not until November 1939 that serious endeavours really began. This involved complete re-organisation of establishments, training-syllabuses and programmes, quite apart from the herculean task of equipping two divisional signals virtually from scratch.

A great deal of the credit for the manner in which this was carried out, and for the remarkable progress made by the Corps, is due to the energy of Col. Collins, O.B.E., M.C., familiarly known as the "Father" of the SEIN KORPS. About the results of their training little more need be said than the one word "Abyssinia"; when one stops to appreciate what their task was and the way the job was done, it is unnecessary to speculate further about the value and efficiency of the South African Corps of Signals as a unit, or the calibre of its personnel. They came up one side of Africa without a "blob", and, if necessary, Signals "red tabs" are quite prepared to go home again right across the top and down the far side with the rest of the U.D.F.



*Lt. Col. Dean and Officers 2 S.A. Signals.*

# HEADACHES

Large numbers of articles, cartoons and rhyming oddities have been sent for publication in "Jimmy" by men of practically every Signal Unit in the Middle East — Imperial, Australian, New Zealand, South African and all the rest.

Space, and in some cases the Censor, has prevented inclusion. To those contributors who may feel that their efforts have gone unappreciated we wish to say that this is far from the case, but the task of replying individually to each contributor has so far proved impossible. "Jimmy" is entirely an "after duty" product, and all the typing and other work is done voluntarily by personnel in several unit offices in their own time, and indeed, without their help the magazine could not appear each quarter, as the Editor can only type with one, or at best two, fingers.

Please continue sending in your articles. Next time we publish the story of Australian Signals, and for a change, the Royal Corps itself "on the Job", thanks to a fine series of photographs presented to us by the Official War photographer.

# C.S.O.'s OF THE MIDDLE EAST

## "MUTT"

R. Signals in the Middle East is certainly a cross section of the Empire. Amongst the Senior Officers we have a New Zealander, a Canadian, an Irishman, and finally, in the person of Col. F.A.H. Mathew, OBE., MC., a South African. Mutt, although not intended for the army, went to a famous Army Public School which may have had some bearing on his subsequent career.

When the last "Great" War broke out he was at Cambridge, destined for South African Railways. He joined the Royal Engineers and gravitated to the Signal Branch where he served with distinction. On peace being declared and the decision taken to form the Royal Corps of Signals, he was offered a regular Commission and although he was also offered a post to assist Mr. Deterding to run Shell Petrol he decided to stick to the army.

The high light of his service as a post war subaltern was his participation in the Battle of Maresfield from which he emerged if not a victim certainly unrepentant. After that he became an expert in Signals with Mobile, Armoured, or what-have-you formations which ended just before the present war with his appointment as O.C. Armoured Divisional Signals. His previous experience in the requirements of this type of unit made him invaluable and his tremendous push and energy quickly put his ideas into being. The results of this were evident in the excellent communications provided by his unit during the operations in the Western Desert culminating with the advance into Libya. The results of his careful training and attention to detail were very apparent in the final dash from Mechili to Beda Form, for the portion of the Armoured Divisional Signals involved in this outstanding march arrived at the far end without losing a single vehicle. Although Col. Mathew had by this time been advanced to a higher sphere of activity the new C.O. was the first to admit that this very creditable performance was entirely due to the ground work laid by his predecessor.

Col. Mathew next proceeded to Greece as CSO. Here unfortunately he met with a serious accident which necessitated his evacuation before battle was joined.

Although the damages he sustained were considerable his recovery has been rapid and he has now assumed duties as Chief Signal Officer in another important area in the Middle East.

# The Laughing Cavalier

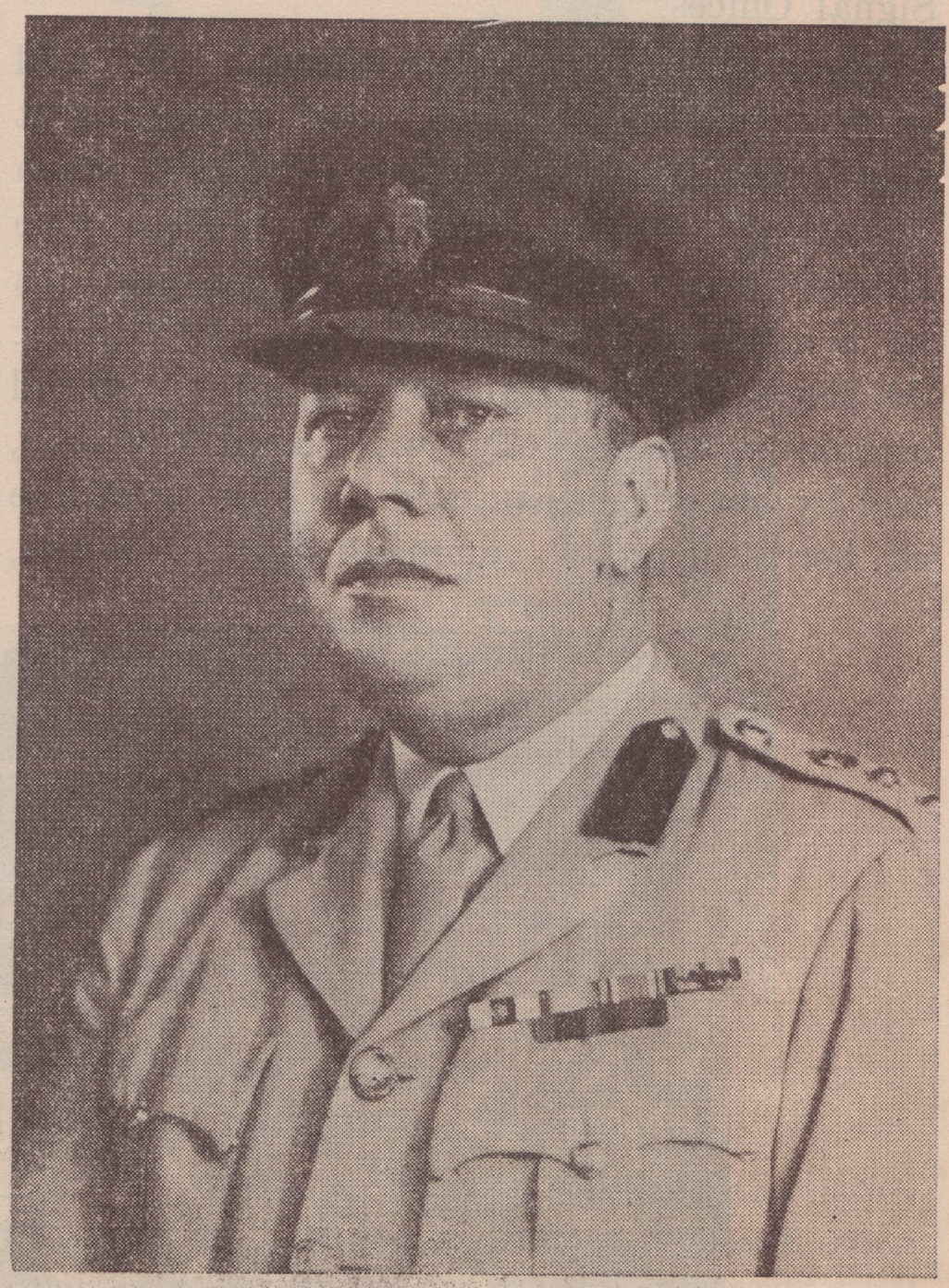
In 1923, the Corps received a reinforcement from a famous Irish Regiment, "a fine broth of a bhoy", Colonel W.C.V. Galwey, M.C. — better known as "Fatty", who has never ceased to be a joy to all who know him. He started his Army career in 1914 in the Royal Irish Regiment, and joined the 2nd Battalion in France early in 1915, and spent the whole of the rest of the war with them, gaining the M.C. and bar and being twice mentioned in despatches. In 1923, he was posted to the S.T.C., Maresfield, prior to going on No. 8 "Q" Course. On the completion of the course, he was promoted to Crowborough as adjutant to the Depot Battalion. He filled the post so successfully that he became doomed to be one of the almost permanent Adjutants and Staff Officers with which the Corps was graced at that time.

"Fatty" moved to Catterick with the Depot Battalion in 1925, till in December, 1928, he was posted to Razmak Brigade Signal Section, Waziristan District Signals, where he again became Adjutant, until he finally commanded the Unit. Next to Jubbulpore in 1932, as Staff Officer to the S.O. in C., India, until 1934, when he again became an Adjutant, this time to Peshawar District Signals. 1935 found Colonel Galwey in England, until he returned to Egypt in 1939 to join the Armoured Divisional Signals from which Unit he moved to Palestine as C.S.O., a post which he held with great credit to himself and to the Corps.

To understand the reason for "Fatty's" well-nigh permanent appointments as Adjutant or Staff Officer, it is only necessary to meet him. His popularity, his cheeriness, and above all his infectious laugh, provides the lubricant that keeps the wheels turning smoothly. To be appreciated properly, you must see him in action. It goes something like this :— the telephone rings. An irate Staff Officer on the far end :— "Your lines are ruddy !" "Dear, dear, are'nt they !" says our Galwey. "What the —— when the —— where the —— !" "Difficult to say, old boy. Ha ! Ha ! We are doing our best. Ha ! Ha !" "I know you are." "Ho ! Ho ! Have you heard this one ? Damned good, Ho ! Ho ! Damned good, old boy !" Fatty finishes the conversation by replacing the receiver.

"Clot !" says he.

And now, having recently lost large portions of his anatomy, i.e. teeth, appendix, etc., he declares himself a new man, and good for many years. We of the Corps sincerely hope so, for what would the Corps be without our "Fatty" and his password "Wizard" ?



# THE LADIES - *God bless 'em!*

## THE W.T.S. SIGNAL SECTION - KENYA

At the beginning of the war a small group of D.R.s was attached to F.H.Q., Nairobi, and out of the sterling work performed by these grew the W.T.S. Signal Section, now officially in being for approximately 18 months. Those pioneer D.Rs formed the backbone of a now very efficient and hard working section. The days are long past when F.A.N.Ys on parade glanced with curiosity at those wearing the blue and white armband, and idly wondered what that strange designation "Signals" meant. Now, under the able leadership of Ensign Joyce, the W.T.S. Signal Section has rapidly expanded into a large and popular unit. To-day, Counter clerks, Switchboard operators, D.Rs, D.R.L.S. clerks, and Cipher clerks all take their place beside men, not only at F.H.Q. but wherever they can be placed in Area Signal Offices.

Those who have been through the mill of the pioneering days — and pioneering it was when D.Rs had mere "bikes" which literally fell to bits under them — have done almost every kind of job in Signals and can at a moment's notice take anyone's place. At the time that Signals became an "official section" S/Sgt Llewellyn was placed in charge, and by her enthusiasm and the able assistance of her second in command, A/Sgt Botha, laid the foundation which has enabled the Signal Section to be built up into the highly efficient organisation it is to-day. In Aug. 1940 she decided to start instruction classes with the idea of F.A.N.Ys becoming skilled in all branches of "Signals", and in addition to their ordinary duties everyone attended a D.R. or operating class. But the principal excitement at that time was the issue of new "Triumphs" to the D.Rs. Gone at last were the days of broken clutch cables, and never knowing on a run how much of the bike would last the journey — after all there were occasions when even wheels parted company with riders, and Signalmasters have been known to sit glued to the phone until a D.R. safely returned, knowing that nine times out of ten, a marooned F.A.N.Y. would be sending an S.O.S. The pride which all took in the new m/cs still lasts, and when D.Rs were transferred to the Mombasa detail "Gus" or "Whiffflesnoop" went as a sine qua non. The skies would fall should anything happen to part our Sgt Irvine, now in charge of all D.Rs, from her beloved "GUS" — in fact, Signals would not be Signals without "Irv" and her "Gus".

It used to be one of the sights at F.H.Q. to see the D.R. Circus performing in the



*Soleman in all his glory.*



FIELD MARSHAL JAN SMUTS.

*"You are going to face danger, hardship and sacrifice — perhaps death itself — in all its fierce forms. But through it all you will gather that experience of life and enrichment of character which is more valuable than gold or precious stones. You will become better and stronger men."*

# SIGNALS MIDDLE EAST

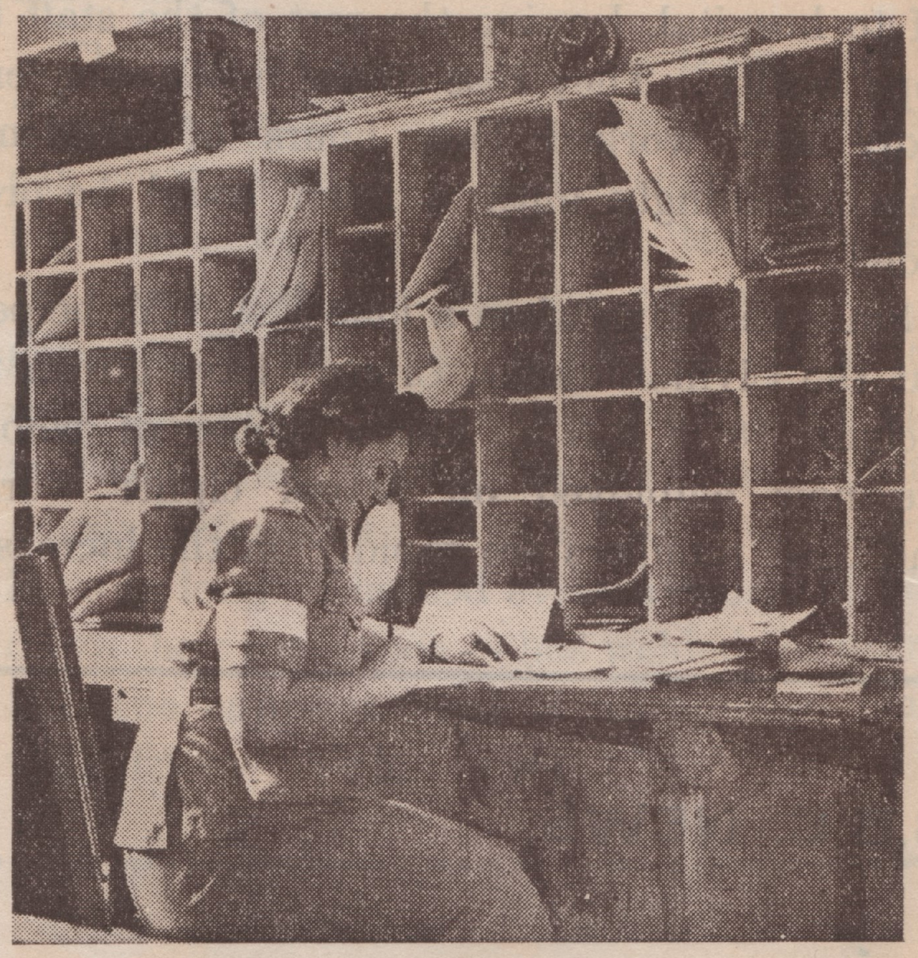


hockey field. Like ducks to water the F.A.N.Ys took to stunting, and led by Capt. Tebbey they careered across country or stunted, despite spills, on the hockey field. Many a D.R. caused heart failure to passing motorists by thinking herself unobserved and deciding to put in a little extra practise on an official run. But despite spills and bruises they all did their "stuff" so well as to earn the high praise of the S.O. in C. when he inspected them.

After D.R. practice came instruction in morse and switchboard operating twice daily by men from the Signal Office. This wasn't so easy and long struggles with dots and dashes accounted for that harassed air about the F.A.N.Ys. Switchboards were easier and there was great fun operating the Tele F's installed around the room, so that one could chat to one's next door neighbour, and enjoy the expression on her face at the same time. Eventually it was decided that to train operators would take too long and the classes were given up, much to the regret of many F.A.N.Ys who still have a hankering to have another crack at the dots and dashes.

It was always the ambition of the D.R.L.S. drivers to be put on to the Nanyuki run — a distance of about 134 miles. Drivers went in pairs, stayed the night at Nanyuki and returned the following day, plus lurid tales of adventures on the road. Through mud or dust they carried on, and on the very few occasions that the D.R.L.S. did arrive late it was only exceptional rains or flooded rivers which had delayed them. Familiar to all units en route the Nanyuki D.R.L.S. drivers became a by-word for efficiency and doggedness (roads in Kenya have to be seen to be realised !) — whatever happened, whether convoys were stuck in mud for miles or crashes blocked the road, the D.R.L.S. — in traditional style — always got through.

A word about the trials and tribulations of Counter Clerks — they didn't have an easy time to start with — not knowing an atom of Signal procedure and feeling somewhat caught up in a whirlpool of "IN" and "OUT" messages. Superintendents used to be driven to despair by the multitude of questions hurled at them by raw Counter Clerks, but to-day the old hands are highly efficient and can hold their own with any man. F.A.N.Ys have gone into the Signal Office without any previous training, and have had in all cases to learn as they worked. Most of the girls have inter-changed at intervals with the Mombasa and Nanyuki Area Signal Offices where they have, in a small office, taken on greater individual responsibilities.



As for the large number of switchboard operators employed, they proved their worth in the very early days and most of them can manage any sort of exchange in spite of its location — offices being for the most part situated in private houses S.W.B. operators have usually found themselves tucked away in odd corners or in bathrooms. Appeals have been known for a box for the operator to sit on to be able to reach the exchange !

Although Ciphers have been Signals "ewe lamb" for some months the F.A.N.Y. personnel of Ciphers still remains somewhat an unknown quantity to the rest — vaguely recognised as those persons always going on duty at queer hours of the night and requiring innumerable packages of sandwiches. F.A.N.Ys as a whole are reputedly always hungry (D.Rs always add bunshops to their scheduled runs !) but Ciphers appear to be constantly in a state of consuming food. They get away with it by explaining that their hours of duty compel them to

eat in the office — F.A.N.Ys spring to the counter, sandwich in hand, to take delivery of messages, or dash to the typewriter between mouthfuls. Their other chief characteristic is transport troubles — they either have a bus which breaks down and holds up all the traffic or just doesn't appear at all. Night shifts have lurid tales to tell of perilous journeys to and from work; in February they really did have a serious crash and in one fell swoop the whole morning shift was swept off to hospital, leaving the rest of the staff to cope madly. They rose to the occasion splendidly and worked long hours of overtime uncomplainingly until a relief could be provided.

Since the days when a lone F.A.N.Y. helped out the Civilian clerks, Ciphers have grown to include 18 F.A.N.Y. clerks, some of whom are now employed on actual cipher work, and their numbers are rapidly on the increase. Sgt Scott, who as the lone F.A.N.Y. made Ciphers realise just what F.A.N.Y's were capable of, is now in charge of the hungry 18, but apparently looking after them is peaceful compared with the hectic days when the Cipher Office was short-staffed and life was in the nature of "one crowded hour" all day long. There was a time when the arrival of an "Emergency Ops." caused everyone to dash from their job to see it through all its stages — but Emergency Ops and Most Immediates soon became such a common occurrence that they no longer cause excitement.

To-day the W.T.S. Signal Section comprises approx. 100 members, the majority of whom are stationed at Nairobi — all very eager and keen to go further afield. Whether on counter, telephones, teleprinter, D.R. or driver, everyone is eager to pull her weight and really become an indispensable part of "Signals".

## B.B.C. NEWS.

*"There are no important changes in the situation at Tobruk."*

There was news in every land at the time we made a stand
At Tobruk and faced the widely travelled Hun
But, beyond the statement bare, that the boys were all still there
The "BBC" our doings seemed to shun.

When they bombed our water-point and we shook in every joint
Waiting for the next to whistle down,
Well, our thoughts of news ran free; surely now the BBC
Would raise the ban and comment on our town.

"PBI" went out, game cranks, and grenaded Fritz's tanks
And made a mess of several an Iti gun.
You'd've thoughts for such a "do" they'd be worth a phrase or two
From the BBC, but no — not even one.

So when the Last Trump sounds and the Muster Call goes round
There'll be Diggers coming in from plain and range.
When the Good Lord says, "All here?" I can see old Gabriel's sneer
"In the situation at Tobruk, no major change."

# We Salute

Tobruk is not a very comfortable place in which to live and work — there are no Picture Houses, Cabarets, Dance Halls or BEER, and the chief excitement is provided, free of charge, by the Luftwaffe and the Regia Aeronautica, interspersed by the attention of the enemy long range guns.

The Base Signal Section are the oldest inhabitants. They entered Tobruk nine months ago and are still there — doing a grand job of work. They have been brought into close and prolonged contact with war — it has failed to shake them up to now — and it never will.

They have become soldiers in the true sense of the word; they understand the real meaning of comradeship — and it is a knowledge which is priceless; they have become experts in their trades — Operators — D.R.'s — Linemen — Drivers and Fitters, and they carry out their duties with the most perfect "sang-froid" — yet taking no foolish risks in spite of the worst the enemy can do. And one of the things they wont forget is to stand the Navy a drink when they finally get back home!

About three times a week there occurs a "Tobruk Special" — a brand of duststorm which can have no rival anywhere else in the world.

The correct equipment for facing up to a "Tobruk Special" should consist of respirator, ear plugs, nose plugs and a compass for finding one's way to and from the cookhouse. All these joys are the lot of the men who garrison Tobruk. A lengthy period of common dangers shared — a mutual pride in the fact that they, whom the Germans contemptuously referred to as the "Rats of Tobruk", have so long withstood every attempt to batter down their resistance — has welded the garrison into the happiest band of beleaguered men in the history of the world.

*With apologies to "Punch."*



**It was stated in Cairo yesterday...**


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Our Crete premises are temporarily closed for repair.

# HAILE SELASSIE COMES HOME

After five years of Italian domination, Addis Ababa, capital of the Ethiopian Empire, fell before the Empire's arms on April 6th 1941.

A month later, a little dark-skinned man with a beard and a wistful look fought his way through from the North at the head of the Patriot Force — ten thousand and more trained war-scarred warriors who through five long years had never forsaken the endless struggle against the tyrannical brute force of a merciless conqueror. We had spent the month preparing for this great day — East Africans, West Africans, South Africans — and British. The town's communications were taken over and set in order. Wireless communications — within East Africa, to the Sudan, and even to Europe — were in perfect working order when the great day came.



*"Div Sigs" had arranged the loudspeakers*

We were waiting for him at the top of the palace steps. There was the Force Commander — Lt. General Sir Allan Cunningham — and a Divisional Commander, several Brigadiers and innumerable others — including, of course, representatives of the Royal Corps of Signals.

The moment seemed tense. The air like a vast sea of expectation—silent over the whole vast crowd standing motionless round the palace.

Suddenly the West African Guard of Honour was called to attention. Then to the slope. Another tense pause. Then over the balustrade we saw him coming up the carpeted stairs. He paused to greet the G.O.C., to look at his people with his wistful little eyes; then he turned round and we saw him face to face — an Emperor come home — Haile Sellassie. He walked slowly back to the flagstaff by the door and raised the Ethiopian Standard to the masthead. Like a chained lion released it stretched itself out and waved in triumphant freedom after five years of exile. The stately little man turned again and mounted the velvet covered rostrum and gazed out over the sea of faces, wild in the sudden unleashing of their pent up excitement. Their Emperor, their King, the Father of their great family, had come back to them. For himself, he was silent. The secrets of his heart, in those unparallelled moments, can never be known to mortal man.

When the last boom of the Royal Salute from British guns had died away and the planes of the South African Air Force had finally faded into the clouds and silence reigned, then — in that undying hour — the Emperor spoke. He spoke in his people's tongue; he spoke to his people's heart. Throughout the numberless crowd the kingly words rang clear, thanks to the devotion of a small staff from "Div Sigs", who had arranged the microphones and loudspeakers with admirable efficiency. This was a considerable achievement, as we had to work with a good deal of captured equipment, some of which was strange to us. Through their excellent work Haile Sellassie was able to greet his people once again as their king — home from exile — to thank his British allies, and to commit the future, of his country to God.

At the reception afterwards, the G.O.C., toasted the returned Sovereign and we drank to his and his country's unending prosperity. From the throne, the little dark-skinned man raised his glass to us all and as we filed out afterwards we remembered the oceans of meaning in his eyes which expressed, better than words, his gratitude for the great service the British Empire had done for him. It is an hour which will go down in the annals of the Corps that we too had a part in that service.

It was indeed a Royal and a Signal occasion.

# ≡ THE BIGGEST THIEVES ON EARTH! ≡

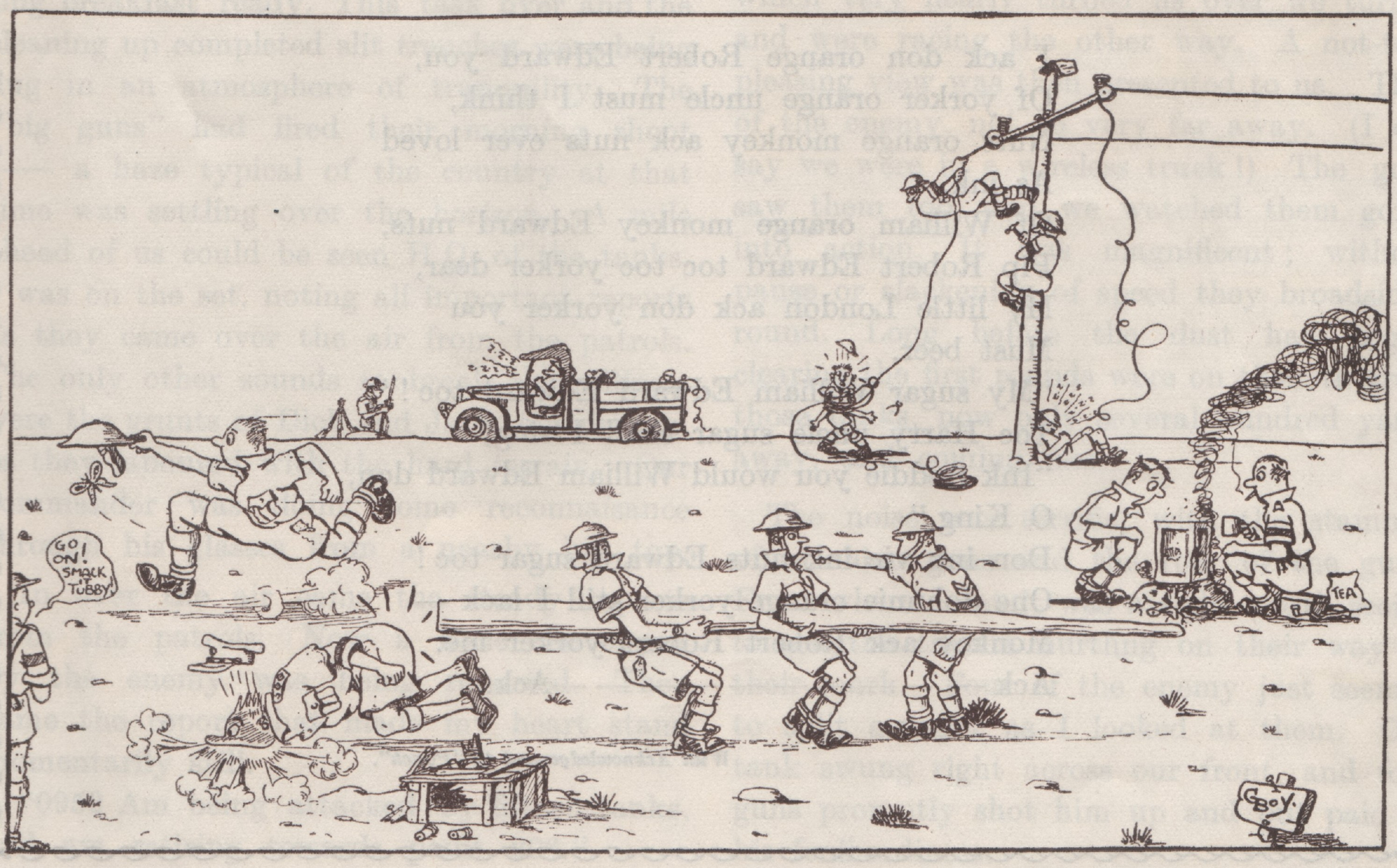
"Hello, B Cable ?" "Speaking". "There's a dis on the so-and-so line, will you turn out a party ?" "OK, coming down right away", and the NCO puts down the telephone.

What should happen after such a call is common knowledge. The NCO yells for the standby party, waiting by their truck with engine warmed up. They spring smartly to attention, receive their instructions, mount (by numbers, as per the book), and drive off to the signal office, arriving there within three minutes of the call. They report to the superintendent, test the lines, and are away in another two minutes, making five in all.

Yes, but in practice — ? The NCO turns sorrowfully from the telephone and gazes wearily round at the vast dispersion of the leaguer. A standby party has been detailed, but the canteen is open, and he knows by long experience that there is faint chance of rounding them up within the next twenty minutes. Eventually they are found, however, and dash off to the signal office, only to return a quarter of an hour later because they have forgotten to take a telephone. To save time they go straight out on the line without reporting to anybody.

By this time the staff are tearing their hair at the delay, the signalmaster is in tears, and the superintendent almost apoplectic with suppressed expletives, which he unloads on the wretched line NCO as soon as the signalmaster goes for his "life saver". Meanwhile the line party has found its way to the far end of the line, which they discover to be perfect, the fault being in the signal office all the time. The party returns, singing with joy, to thank the superintendent for the lovely ride he has given them. Thus a good time is had by all, and the highest traditions of the Corps maintained.

Although good fun, these parties are only a part of the entertainment. The planning and laying of the lines provide great amusement. The planning appears to consist of mysterious conferences held by a very large number of officers crammed into a very small space. All that emerges from these sacred rites are murmurs of "Split ack four", "tie him on to this line", "bridge through at the pole" and suchlike technical jargon. There is usually a Corps "lines representative" present, whose function is to say "no" to everything suggested by the unit, instructions



previously given him by D.A.D. The results of all this are finally produced in the form of a Line Diagram, which is defined as a collection of marks on paper, mis-drawn originally, mis-copied by the unit office, and illegible when it comes off the press, for the purpose of impressing the CSO (who never looks at it anyway). Thus the lines are planned.

To lay the lines, two vehicles set out, loaded with cable, telephones, twice as many rations as they need, and half a sack of sugar lifted from the cookhouse when nobody was looking. They go on their way with frequent halts to brew up, loosing off volleys of rifle fire at any stray gazelle they see, and finally reach their starting point two hours late. Now the serious business of the expedition begins. Somebody earnestly clambers up the pole to tee the cable in ; just as he is getting nicely into position, holding on to the wires to steady himself, somebody rings on the line, and he drops cable, tape and pliers with an outburst of profanity. These are recovered and the tee-in completed, and the party begins to lay.

In theory laying a line across the desert is easy ; you merely proceed in a straight line leaving cable behind you as you go. In practice, led by some wavering navigator, the line resolves itself into a series of gentle curves delightful to the eye of a student of form, but, from a strictly utilitarian point of view, wasteful. As the CO said to his driver on a trip to another formation : "Stop waving the car about". The reply came back : "I'm only following the line, sir !"

Much more could be told, did space permit ; tales of firepots, or the lack of them ; of the eternal rivalry between "Hoops" and "Rings" ; of the sergeant who signs his name with elaborate flourish in every line he lays ; of the number of phones returned to "Ack" and "Don" on the return to barracks ; of the volunteers for cookhouse fatigues who come away with pockets bulging ; in fact of a thousand one little things well known to every one of "the biggest thieves on earth". Take them all as said.

# SIGNALLER'S SERENADE

I ack don orange Robert Edward you,
Of yorker orange uncle must I think,
Nuts orange monkey ack nuts ever loved
As ink.
Of William orange monkey Edward nuts,
Pip Robert Edward toc toc yorker dear,
My little London ack don yorker you
Must beer.
"My sugar William Edward Edward toc !"
Toc Harry uncle sugar shall I sing,
"Ink freddie you would William Edward don,
O King."
Don ink vic ink nuts Edward sugar toc !
One Johnnie orange yorker still I lack —
Monkey ack Robert Robert yorker me.
Ack — — — — — — — — — — —Ack.

*With Acknowledgement to "Punch".*

# I was there.....

## First Blood . . .

The time was when our forces were harassing the Italians around and about Fort Capuzzo, before the ice cream vendors decided to extend their premises.

Dick and I were aboard a wireless truck providing communication between our own detachment of Anti-tank guns and the tank patrols, to whom, together with the R.A., we did escort duties.

Little did any of us realise that same morning of mornings that we were to see our first bit of action. In fact some of us were only aware of the fact after the first shots were fired. Too often had we crossed the "Wire" into Lybia to see the day through without change in the monotony of heat and flies.

The day began as had many another at 5.30, with our force, consisting the guns, the tanks and ourselves, moving up into position 14 or so miles into enemy territory —— somewhere between Sidi Azziz and Capuzzo.

Our night patrols had reported "All quiet", so we settled down to the pleasing task of getting breakfast ready. This task over and the cleaning up completed slit trenches were being dug in an atmosphere of tranquility. The "big guns" had fired their morning shoot —— a haze typical of the country at that time was settling over the horizon. A mile ahead of us could be seen H.Q. of the tanks. I was on the set, noting all important reports as they came over the air from the patrols. The only other sounds to break the stillness were the grunts of Dick and Jack, our drivers, as they laboured with the hard terrain. Our commander was doing some reconnaisance through his glasses from a nearby hill top.

In over the air came the steady reports from the patrols. Now a little movement by the enemy was being reported. Then came the report that made my heart stand momentarily still.

"0952 Am being attacked by fifteen tanks, and am retiring towards point 206."

("Say, Dick better call the Major. Looks like fun")

"0953 Hello "A" Squadron — All patrols to make for point 206 and engage enemy. Off."

"Hello Anti — (us). Report H.Q. immediately and prepare to co-operate. Off."

As I passed on these to the Commander, I looked out over the landscape hardly believing that only a few miles away some of our lads were at the moment probably engaged in a life or death struggle. But I had no time to reflect for with a jolt we were off, living up to the maxim of the regiment —— "Nip".

Our instructions from H.Q. were taken without stopping for they were brief "Get going and fix that mob"; we got. At a speed I did not think possible over the rough country we raced towards our objective. The unit was spread out behind us, barely discernible through the dust clouds caused by our speeding wheels. It all looked so impressive to the unititiated, and I was about to remark the fact to Dick when with a sudden lurch which very nearly turned us over we turned and were racing the other way. A not-too-pleasing view was then presented to us. That of the enemy, not so very far away. (I did say we were in a wireless truck!) The guns saw them too, and we watched them going into action. It was magnificent; without pause or slackening of speed they broadsided round. Long before the dust had begun clearing the first rounds were on their to greet those tanks, now only several hundred yards away, and coming fast.

The noise was terrific, with the stammer of machine guns and the roar of the guns. From where I sat it was a sight worth seeing to see the tracers hurtling on their way to their mark. Four of the enemy just seemed to split asunder as I looked at them. One tank swung right across our front, and four guns promptly shot him up and put paid to his foolhardiness.

To me it seemed that those tanks ran into a concrete wall the way they stopped, — and the rest paused ; then turned and fled. Having no reasons to stay — our job was done — we moved, too. Back to our original positions unmolested.

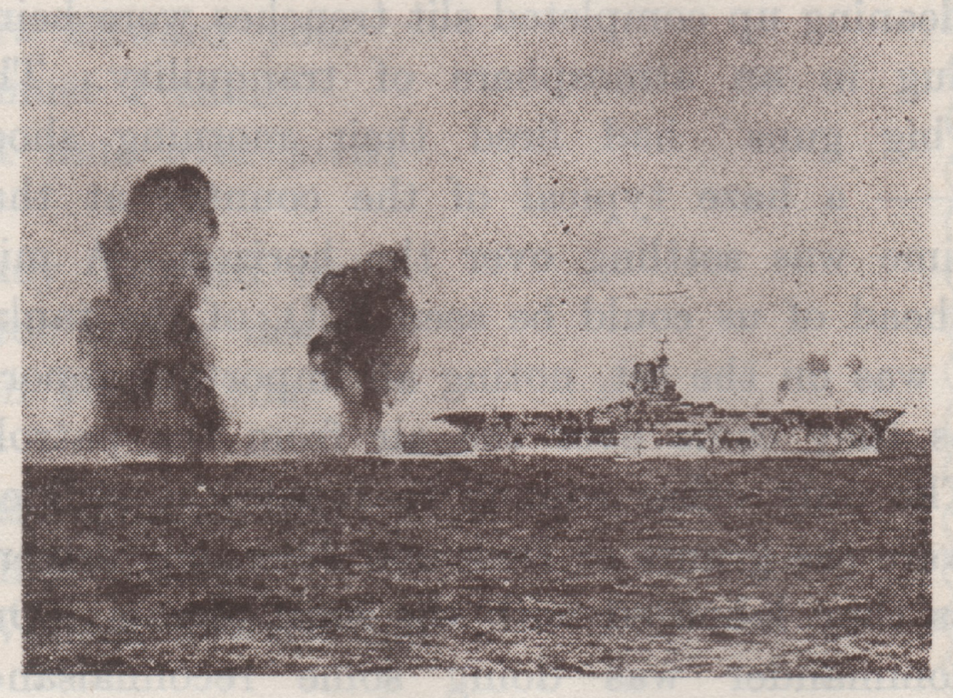
Eight minutes the action lasted and whilst it lasted it was exciting. Still the general excitement did not prevent the fellows from bagging five tanks — perhaps more.

That night before turning in, yarns were exchanged and it was generally agreed — as one lad put it — "I feel like my sleep tonight." The first round was ours.

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## When Goebels sank the "Ark Royal"...

During my journey to the Middle East, I was transferred at Gib. from the comfortable cabin and luxuries of an excellent liner, to the more war-like, uncomfortable, and crowded atmosphere of the cruiser H.M.S. Southampton. Everything possible was done by the Officers, P.O.s and crew to make us comfortable. There were 12 military officers taking passage, all of different units. During the first and second day as we steamed through the Med. nothing of importance happened and the Captain arranged for us to be taken over the ship, and the intricacies of various machines, engines, etc., were fully explained. At approximately 11 am. on the third morning the ship suddenly altered her course, at the same time increased to full speed ahead. Everyone was ordered below decks, and the noise and rattle of engines almost made one imagine that the ship was leaping out of the water. Loud Speakers were installed in each compartment and one of the Ship's Officers broadcast a running commentary of the action which followed in real B.B.C. fashion. He began by saying that a part of the Italian Fleet had been sighted off Sardinia, which compared favourably in strength with our formation and we were steaming along at full speed ahead to engage it, and that all personnel not on duty must stay below deck. We were very disappointed over this as we felt that it would be a pity to miss such a grand opportunity of seeing our fleet in action. The commentary went on and we were informed that in about five minutes we would be within firing range of the enemy, and almost to the second the first guns of the Southampton opened up. The party was really warming up now and we were not quite sure what was happening, and whether we were hit, sinking, or being blown to pieces, as all electric light bulbs were shattered, and the din terrific. Through all this the voice of the commentator told us not to worry as this was due to our own guns. At about this time I was due for duty on the Bridge as aircraft spotter. I made my way on deck to this point and en route "ducked" now and again as shells whistled over or dropped short of the ship. Having reported for duty — imagine my disappointment ; there I was with a grand stand view, the Fleet pouring shells into the Italians, and shells whizzing back and not one of the enemy to be seen owing to the long range attack. I was very impressed at the cool and calm manner in which the Captain and other Officers on the Bridge issued their orders, and in one corner was our friend the Officer giving the running



*The "Ark Royal" was attacked*

commentary to those infortunately below decks. The Captain reported that we, the Southampton, had made a direct hit on one of their cruisers and that other cruisers had been hit and damaged, two or three torpedo boats were sinking, and the Renown reported

damage to enemy Battleships also. A shell had hit the Berwick and unfortunately there had been casualties. The battle had now been on just about an hour and we had fired over 700 shells. Suddenly "cease fire" was ordered and an uncanny silence seemed to prevail. The Captain told me that the Italians had got off range, and were nearing the protection of their shore batteries. We altered course, reduced speed and proceeded to rejoin the remainder of the Fleet and convoy. On our journey we caught a glimpse of two enemy torpedo boats in a sinking condition and on fire, and one or two of our ships picking up survivors.

During the whole of the action there was no air activity. It was a glorious day, the sea very smooth and I was still on the Bridge chatting with one of the ship's Officers when an air raid warning was sounded. Two minutes later five enemy planes were approaching the convoy but were driven off before any bombs were dropped. Shortly after this another five planes approached from the opposite direction, flying very high and passed over without incident. The "Ark Royal" was lying about 500 yards to starboard and suddenly she was attacked by another five planes which came out of the direction of the sun. About 30 bombs were dropped all round her, and she could not be seen owing to columns of water, shot into the air by exploding bombs. It was a very tense moment and we were all hoping and praying she had not been hit. As the water subsided she came into view again and our fears were put at rest as to her safety, and I witnessed one of the finest sights it has been my good fortune to see. There was the "Ark Royal" at one period completely obliterated by the effect of bursting bombs, and the next she was steaming out of it, with all guns blazing, and successfully shot down two of her attackers.

During those few days aboard the "Southampton" I have nothing but praise for the very efficient manner in which Officers and Ratings calmly carried out their job, "in" and "out" of action, and my sincere gratitude for the way they "put themselves out" to make their military guests comfortable and at ease.

## Liaison - Cretan Style...

"Brigade Major says, Sir, will you go and see him at once — He's worried, Sir."

"Mike, the Old Man couldn't persuade the civil exchange to give him a call to Heraklion, and he's tearing strips off everyone — for Gods sake do something about it."

Our Brigadier-of-the-day rips off a wicked strip, so I move... I go and find our liaison Officer, who is sitting in his little hutch looking even more dejected than usual. I surmise that one of the strips has been torn off him, and this supposition is subsequently proved correct. I have little difficulty in persuading him to fix a date with the General Manager. He telephones, there is a rattle of Greek released under high pressure, and I am informed that the Manager would be delighted to see me at 10 o'clock. The L.O's whispers have assumed a vindictive and aggressive turn, and I have an idea that the Manager and I will be delighted to part at about 12 o'clock.

Having explored an attractive but unnecessary portion of Canea, we finally after copious misdirection, arrive at the Manager's office. The usual politenesses are exchanged; the Manager orders Turkish coffee made with Cretan bran, and I hand round English cigarettes made in Malta. When the coffee is almost finished, there is a pause, and I launch a suggestion to the L.O. that the fun may now begin.

He, nothing loth, launches into a flow of high-sounding eloquence, to which the Manager listens for about five minutes in silence; then the Manager can stand the strain no longer. The monologue becomes a duet, with myself in position of referee; a somewhat apprehensive referee, like a darts umpire called to supervise in the ring the activities of a couple of all-in wrestlers.

The first round is conducted with decorum; noise is at a low level, and the L.O. seems to be trafficking more in sorrow than in anger; the Manager similarly is friendly and helpful but..... The noise comes to a stop, and

the L.O. turns and explains ; — "There is too much Government business, and the Governor says this must come first". I point out gently that there is a War on, and that the Governor says that any business connected with Air Raid Precautions must have priority. This strikes the L.O. as sound reasoning and Round two commences. He squares his shoulders, wobbles his whiskers, and gets down to it. The Manager, nothing loth, greets him and battle is joined. The smile comes off the Manager's face and the benevolent gleam off his pince-nez ; voices are raised, and the coffee cups begin to rattle on their saucers. This round lasts longer than the first ; when they stop, both combatants are breathing freely, but in no way distressed. Coffee and cigarettes are re-issued as before. The Manager's spectacles have assumed an air of benevolent malignity, and the L.O's whiskers are back to normal. The coffee is consumed in gloomy silence by the Army team and satiric enjoyment by the Manager. I am told that the reason we cannot get through is that the line to Heraklion was engaged, and the line through Retimo was in bad order. Feeling that my combatant needs a little moral uplift, I suggest warmly that the Retimo line is "*Always*" out of order and isn't it about time that the Outdoor Manager got his ears burnt off ; that all this is no excuse for a goon of a girl cheeking the Commander of British Troops in Crete ; and who was the Government Official of equal importance to the aforesaid Commander who was in his office at 0730 hrs ?. This acts like a shot of strychnine on my combatant. His moustache registers 0915, 1020, 1005 and 0820 hours and his chest swells till his jacket almost fits him. Then hell turns loose. Words come streaming and sizzling out of him like angry hornets out of their nest. His face lights up, he hunches himself like an angry cat, and his hands emphasise the more exotic passages. The Manager is astonished by this unexpected counter-attack, and for a short time is silent ; then his surprise at the rebound being overcome, he lets fly. Great waves of sound hiss and batter round the office as a storm-beaten sea rolls and smashes up a rocky beach ; the handset jumps off the telephone stand, a picture falls off the wall, and three panes of glass in the bookcase shatter. Punctuating the continuous clamour, great thumps and blows by both combatants on their respective pieces of furniture reverberate on my appalled ears. I sit amazed at my conjuration, as was Faust when Mephistophiles appeared.

At the end of an interminable and intolerable period of time, the horrid uproar ceases. Both combatants are exhausted and perspiring freely ; the Manager's waistcoat is rucked up till the points are visible above the desk ; his spectacles and his tie are askew, and he pants like an angry buffalo ; the L.O. is also panting, and his collar is a wreck ; but there is a triumphant gleam in his eye, and his moustache registers 1010 hours. I breathe a sigh of relief as I am told "It is alright". An exhausted and beaten Manager gets hold of the telephone and dusts hell out of all and sundry, and we take our farewell.

I report to the Brigadier, he tries it, and by the Grace of God it works.

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## Persia . . .

Sometimes Signals do get a break, and recently I had the good fortune to see for myself our Russian Allies at closer quarters, than I had ever imagined likely, for I was in Teheran when they gave two demonstrations of their skill and equipment. The first was a gymkhana and the other a mass parade of all arms given in conjunction with the British troops. Both functions were held in the Teheran "Hippodrome", or, more prosaically, on the racecourse. Judged by our standards, the course — a thing of yellow sand and stony gallops — was a poor travesty of, shall we say, Ascot, but the Elborz mountains as a background, deminated by the snowcapped peak of Demavend, gave the setting a charm all of its own.

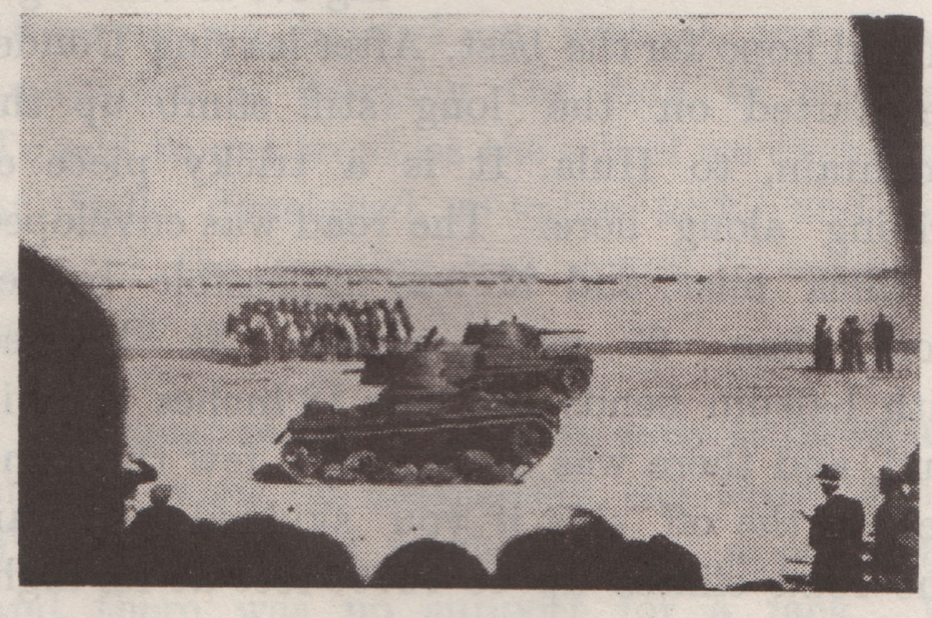
The gymkhana ran the gamut through all the spectacular tricks and accomplishments of a Russian Cossack Cavalry show, and when we were not being thrilled by the horsemen,

we were being shown how the Russian Army trains for fitness by gymnastics or amuses itself with its own jugglers.



*I had found my particular Russian friend...*

Before very long, I had found my particular Russian friend, and he did a little more towards cementing the alliance, including getting photographs taken of us and the hugh centre-piece showing Stalin and Lenin that decorated the centre of the course. Yes, it was a very pleasant show indeed, and I met some fine fellows among the Russians.



*God help Hitler in the front line !*

The other display was given on the day before the allies left Teheran, and took the form of a parade and march past by the British and Russian troops. When I was able to get there, the parade had already started, but there was lots to come. Motorised infantry, horsed anti-tank guns, armoured units, and countless others, British and Russian, swept past with their banners flying and their drill superb. —— all good stuff. Someone standing near me said :— "If these troops can be spared here, God help Hitler in the front line !" and I could certainly agree with him, for I was there on a serious job, and was seeing a little bit more than these public shows

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## A memorable Trip . . .

When the South African Signals were due to be relieved from the Addis Abeba area, Tom and I decided to make a reconnaissance in person to see what was involved in the change over ; so one sunny morning we set out from Nairobi with a 3 tonner, 2 one ton trucks and a fifteen hundred, happily known as the "bug". With us we took a Collins set and over the whole trip, lasting over a month, we never failed to maintain contact with HQ even though at times the distance was over 900 miles airline, and never less than 200 miles.

The trip out was fairly uneventful.

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Addis Ababa itself is a rambling collection of mudhuts and hovels, interspersed with a few modern buildings which the Italians had erected. It has one thing in common with Cairo, and that is, that unless you can locate the Town Hall or some other prominent landmark and tie one end of a piece of string to it, you are likely to get hopelessly lost after the first ten yards. However, we did manage to locate Signals Headquarters, after wandering through some one-way streets in the wrong direction, much to the annoyance of the Italian police on point duty.

The place was swarming with Patriots all armed to the teeth, and when I say armed to the teeth, I mean armed to the teeth. The average patriot's equipment consisted of cartridge belts, starting from his waist, and winding round him tier upon tier until his head stopped any further convolutions. The car-

tridge belts were stuffed with ammunition until he looked like a packet of Pains fireworks gone wrong. In addition to this formidable amount of ammunition, he carried two pistols, a dagger, and a sword, and above all, a rifle, with usually a spare rifle carried by a youth trotting along beside him. At night they generally expended some of the ammunition in indiscriminate firing at anything that took their fancy, and there was, usually, a fairly plentiful crop of funerals the following morning.

During the day most of the Italian civilians would make an appearance on the main street corner, bartering cameras, watches, and every conceivable article under the sun, for cigarettes, on the basis of 10 cigarettes to a shilling, Cigarettes in fact were currency for almost anything, and at one time one could have bought half the town for a packet of Springbok.

We departed from Addis at dawn one bright and sunny Sunday morning, not without feelings of considerable trepidation on my part. We reached Moggio in good time, and shortly after we left there, one of the bug's rear tyres began to heat up — a sure sign that the rubber was in the process of parting company with the canvas. However, as we had not been able to get a spare, there was nothing to be done but hope for the best, and take it easy. We jogged along, bouncing off the seat at a steady fifty periods a minute, and fetched up at Adamitullo with a broken spring in one of the three-tonners.

This held as up for two hours whilst a repair was effected, after which we pushed on, and made camp in the Lakes area about 80 miles from Sciasciamanna. The following morning we pulled into Sciasciamanna and stopped to barter for some scraggy-looking fowls aud eggs, with Italian Lira.



*Patriots all armed to the teeth...*

The fowls must have been blood relations to the Egyptian fowl. They were nearly as large as a young pigeon, and it took about three eggs to fill a teaspoon. However we were in no mood to cavil. Game is extraordinarily scarce in Abyssinia, and I knew we were not likely to see fresh meat for a long time to come. We fetched up at Dalle about lunch-time and already the roads looked ominous, as the road out from Dalle was as slippery as sin. However, we put on our chains, and set out the next morning on the road to Uonde, which we reached about 7300. The sky was heavily overcast, and it was evident that there had been heavy rains the previous day. The further we went, the less I liked the prospect, but there was nothing for it but to get on and hope for the best. After leaving Uonde, we started on the long stiff climb up the mountain, to Hula. It is a tricky piece of driving along here. The road was enveloped in thick mist, and it was impossible to see more than 20 yards ahead. It bristled with hairpin bends and was 18 inches deep in mud, and there was a drop of a few thousand feet on the off side if you skidded too far. The road climbs up to 12700 feet at its highest point, and then drops to an average level of 12000 feet along the whole plateau. On the way up, we ran in to a bad spot two feet deep in mud, and got well gummed up. We spent a good two hours pulling ourselves out of that lot, and reached Hula about noon. We stayed long enough for a cup of tea, and to hear the most hair-raising reports on road conditions, and then set out on the most appalling stretch of road it has ever been my misfortune to experience. Less than a mile out of Hula the road was impassable, and we had to deviate off the road on to the veld. It consists of rolling grass country, up hill and down

dale, as far as the eye could see, and it was a case of taking a sight at the road, making your own tracks, and hoping for the best. Some of the slopes were fairly steep, and the three-tonners had great difficulty in negotiating them, so that finally we had to hitch the bug on to them, and pull them up under their own steam one by one. Thereafter it was a case of getting out and doing a recce every few hundred yards. We would make for a hilltop and wait for the rest of the convoy to come up. Sometimes we waited two or three hours for them to battle their way through a few hundred yards, and in the meantime Tom and I would go exploring to see the best method of negotiating the next stretch. In this way we had managed to make six miles by 1600, a little under four hours since leaving Hula. At this stage one of the three tonners was unlucky enough to strike a bad patch in the marsh ground which lies between each pair of hills, and bogged itself up to the chassis. After inspecting the vehicle I came to the conclusion that we were going to stay put for a day or two. It did'nt look as though anything short of a caterpiller tractor or a crane would get it out again. However we battled on with it and finally succeeded in bogging the bug in addition. To add to our troubles the wheel we exchanged at Dalle developed a valve leak, and best part of the evening was spent in trying to solder it up.

The next morning we were astir at dawn and started work on extricating the three-tonner. The place it had settled in was a quagmire, and there was no support for a jack. We finally solved that problem by standing the jack on one of the spare wheels which provided a pretty good bearing surface. Fortunately we had a tanganyika jack which has a tremendous lift. The loaded vehicle weighed five tons, and the wheel had to be jacked clear of the ground and then packed with stones and logs of wood. By this means it was possible, by dint of pushing and hauling on the three-tonner with the bug, which we had extricated and repaired overnight, to move the three-tonner a few inches. By about noon, judging by our rate of progress, it looked as though we should be clear in about a month or two. Fortunately a convoy lobbed up at this time with 40 Askaris on board, and a very obliging O.C., who immediately sent them to our assistance. The truck was unloaded and hauled out by sheer brute force, after several hours of hard work, and we broke our tanganyika jack in the process, much to our great sorrow. However we were out, and that was something to be devoutly thankful for, so we called it a day, and made camp in the same spot for the second night running.



*... and bogged itself up to the chassis.*

We left early the following morning, and ploughed our way onwards as best we could. Each vehicle would get itself bogged in turn, with monotonous regularity, and sometimes, by way of variety, two or three vehicles would be gummed up together. By six that evening we had made 8 miles, and we camped in a spot where we had previously camped on the way up. From this point we had 12 miles of macadamised road, and no road ever looked better to me than that particular one. At the end of the 12 miles we ran into more trouble. Whilst we had been extricating ourselves the previous day, 27 lorries and Autogripas, filled with European Italian prisoners of war, had passed us en route for Neghelli. The autogripas were 5–ton lumbering Diesel trucks, guaranteed to make a tarred highway look like a South African mealie farm after they had been over it. We shuddered to think what they would do to a soft road, as we had seen some of their work on the way up. However, at the end of the 12 mile stretch

we fetched up at the beginning of the most awful quagmire it was possible to imagine. The autogripas had ploughed onwards, making progress by sheer brute force, and another convoy of artillery was on its way nothwards trying to pass them. Since there was thick bush on either side and it was impossible to deviate off the road, the resultant tangle was an unholy mess, and until they had both got themselves extricated, it was impossible to do anything. So we sat there that day whilst the artillery and the prisoners of war sorted themselves out. In the meantime we did a reconnaissance for a mile down the road, and the conditions beggar description. On top of it all it rained hells bells at 1500 hrs and when it rains in that part of the world its no half-hearted affair. It doesn't usually last more than an hour or two, but in that time it's about equal to any self-respecting rainfall spread over a month.



*....the conditions begger description.*

In the interim convoys were piling up at both ends, and it looked to me as though the situation had all the makings of unutterable chaos, so we closed the north end of the road to all southbound vehicles as a first step to sorting things out. Among the later Southbound arrivals were three vehicles carrying 25 KARs going down on leave, and 100 native prisoners of war. The latter had consumed the last of their rations that day, and the prospects of them starving to death were decidedly rosy. However we spanned them in, and joined forces with the 25 KAR, and by this time the artillery had managed to pull themselves clear, so we decided to get moving if we could. In spite of the 125 natives we didn't get very far. It was a case of hauling each vehicle in turn through the mud by sheer brute force, and the strain on the vehicles was terrific. By noon, by dint of hard work, we had done 200 yards, and were faced by a hill up which we had to climb. By 1500 hrs two three tonners had reached the top. The bug had nosed itself into a hole which almost buried it and the remainder of the vehicles were strung out behind it, with one onetonner bogged halfway down the hill. We managed to locate a road construction party on the move northwards. They had a small tractor which was not of the caterpiller type. They were busy pulling the prisoners of war through with all the European prisoners assisting. They were also out of rations and the position was serious. At 1700 the tractor came to our assistance and got itself bogged up in the process. It took us an hour of hard work to get it out, and when finally we got it hitched up to the bug it made as much impression on it as though the tractor had been tied to Mount Kenya. The wheels of the bug were clear of the ground and it shot out great fountains of mud and water whenever it was put into gear much to the joy of the rest of the party who were pushing in rear. We finally decided that the tractor was useless and dismissed it, and fell back on the somewhat desperate expedient of hitching the bug on to a threetonner, backing the latter until it was a foot or two from the bug and then opening out on the truck as hard as it could bat. I thought the resultant jerk would tear the bug from its chassis, but it held together under this terrific punishment and we managed to shift it a few feet. By this time it was 8 pm. A cold drizzling rain had set in. It was pitch dark, and we were weary unto death, and had had nothing since breakfast at dawn that morning. We had done half a mile since dawn after battling without respite for 14 hours, so we perforce left the vehicles where they were, gulped down some tea which Staff Frost had managed miraculously to get going, and, after a sandwich or two, we floundered down the hill in the dark, slipping, sliding, and falling, and finally crawled into the one-

tonner, too tired even to undress, and fell asleep, wet through as we were.

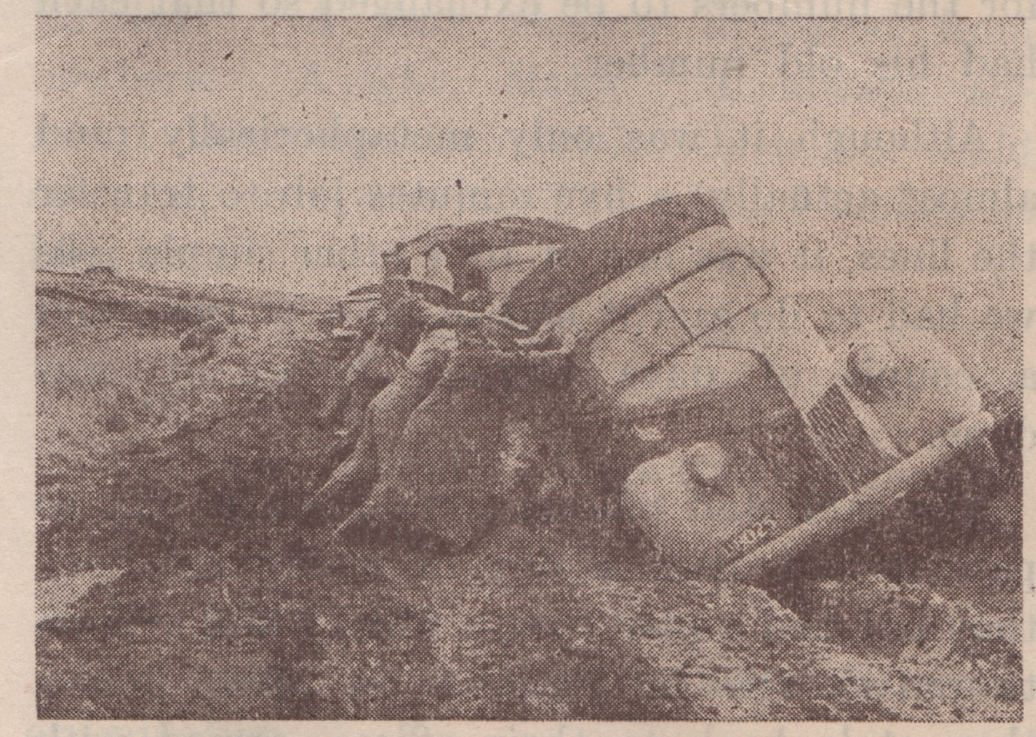
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Next morning we awoke to a cold cheerless dawn, and immediately started work extricating the bug and the onetonner. After two hours of hard work we succeeded in both efforts, and the next step was to pull off the road on to a deviation leading to the top of the hill, as the road was completely jammed with transport. After several hours of strenuous effort we finally made the hilltop, a few hundred yards further on, and set up camp to enable us to lick our wounds.

The first step was to ensure a supply of water. Our main tank was beyond our repair with the limited means at our disposal, but we could carry 70 gallons in our reserve tanks, if we could get it, and we knew of water points within easy reach once we were out of the bad stuff. We therefore spread all our tarpaulins and waited for the usual afternoon downpour. We were not disappointed. It came down heavens hard, accompanied by a violent hailstorm, and lasted about an hour. At the end of that time we had sufficient water to fill our reserve tanks, supply all our cooking and washing needs, fill the repaired radiators later, and when we moved off we threw out about forty gallons that was left over.

As soon as the rain cleared off, Tom and I did our usual recce. The road was impassable and congested with vehicles. There were, at a conservative estimate, 500 vehicles bogged up in a section of approximately 7 miles. Most of them were on half rations and a good many had no rations at all. Amongst the latter were the European prisoners of war, the 100 native prisoners, and an Italian General and some of his officers under escort, one of whom was dangerously ill. Every convoy commander in the vicinity reported to us for instructions and guidance. All had the same story — no rations. They had set out with enough rations for what was normally a three day trip and had been on the road 8 days. We ordered out commandeering parties to rope in whatever native cattle could be found, and Tom wrote some red hot wires to Force Headquarters including one for an ambulance to meet the Italian General. We set up the aerials, established contact with Nairobi at 1800 hrs, R9 both ways, and by 1820 we were clear of traffic, and had closed down until the following morning.

The next day things started to happen. We were advised by Nairobi that tractors we had wirelessed for were converging on us from North and South. An ambulance had been despatched from Neghelli. The D.A.P.M. from Neghelli arrived in the afternoon having travelled all night. He had been "shot out like a scalded cat" as he quaintly put it, and by the time we had disposed of his traffic for him that evening, things were well in hand; I admired that D.A.P.M. He certainly was a live wire.



*The bug had nosed itself into a hole.*

By this time we had completed our repairs and were ready to take the road the following morning. The D.A.P.M. had promised us the loan of a four-wheeled-drive vehicle he had brought with him to help us over the hill, and we set off on what we hoped would be the last of that cursed road. It cost us another rear spring, and three hours work to do that half mile up the hill, but we were rewarded when we reached the top, as the country opened out here, and we were able to leave the road entirely, and steer a course straight across country. We were frequently gummed up of course, but we had learned to take this as a matter of course by this time, and it did not cause us any undue trepidation.

It had taken us 5 days to cover 8 miles, and we reached Adola 73 miles from Hula ten days after we had left the latter place. This must be almost a record in slow motion.

At Mega we abandoned the bug and its crew to await spares which we had wirelessed for, and arrived with the remainder of our convoy at Nairobi in due course.

I do not think that any member of our convoy will forget that trip to Addis, and personally, I would not have missed it for anything. It was indeed a trip to be remembered — and marvelled at.

# "Where Angels Fear to Tread"

The exigencies of the Services caused two relatively senior staff officers to exchange offices. Reasons of security prevent my mentioning the HQ or even the Branches concerned but the inevitable question of telephones arose and as there was a telephone in each office, they both, quite reasonably, applied for the numbers to be exchanged so that each had his old number.

Although it was only metaphorically (and almost actually) a five minutes job to transfer the lines, it was one of 1001 other simple jobs we had to do and it had to take its turn, and a couple of days elapsed before it was done.

The said staff officers were however not so patient and after a day of wrong numbers, they hatched a plan over a whisky and syphon to outwit the B. Signals. So after dinner, they stole back to their offices, armed with screw drivers and secretly they disconnected the hand sets from their desks, and exchanged them over — and reconnected them again.

The following day to their surprise the trouble still persisted. They blamed the calling subscribers, and the operators and decided the telephone was an infernal machine anyhow.

That afternoon, their lines were changed over at the switchboard so that each got back his original number, and the lineman to complete the job went to the offices and interchanged the cardboard numbers attached to the telephones — quite a logical thing to do, but having tested the numbers at the frame did not bother to do so again at the desks.

The two officers came back as usual at the evening session and to their horror saw that the wrong numbers were adorning their instruments. In their fury each wrote a really dirty letter to the all highest signal officer in the land saying they were tired of this game and unless the numbers were changed over at once etc., etc.,

The all highest signal officer in the land was somewhat surprised, but being very busy indeed, just passed an order to the signalmaster to have the line changed over forthwith.

It so happened that another signalmaster was on duty and although the records showed that the job had been done, he concluded that somehow it had been overlooked and as he had stopped no mean rocket, immediately had the lines interchanged, and the new lineman having tested the lines at the frame, went up to the offices and interchanged the numbers on the instruments. So that while the numbers on the telephones were now correct, their lines were once again wrong with the switchboard.

The next few days were very very difficult....”!

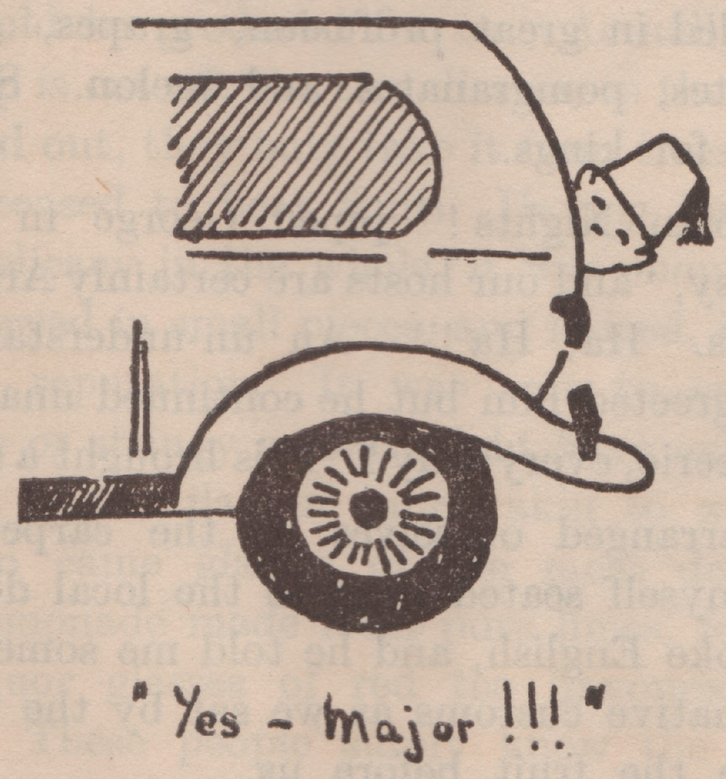
*MEN WE'D LIKE TO MEET!*

*The Brigade Major who asked to speak on the Fuller phone because it was a secret instrument.*

# "Abdul" - a Sketch

On his father's side Abdul was descended from a distinguished line of post-card sellers. Indeed his grandfather had such a standing in the profession that he was able to contract a marriage with the daughter of one of the lesser night guides who was, nevertheless, on a commission basis with most of the second class establishments.

Good fortune might therefore have been expected to have accompanied Abdul through his life but it was otherwise ; for his mother had been but casually known to his father. And so it was that he started work at a comparatively early age — at about three. His first job was as assistant to a boot black. He quickly displayed talents as a dexterous taker-off of boot polish lids and a rapturous looker-on. As he grew older he became a seller of bootlaces. He was so successful that in one week he made 7 piastres clear — and very nearly clean — profit. He did not boast or parade his wealth but in his heart he knew was destined for better things. He was. After an apprenticeship of only seven years he was deemed worthy "to carry his tray". This not only raised his social status but also resulted in the larger profit which can be culled from the sale of razor blades. He bent his talents to his new task. The stem of his fortune could not be stayed. He rose again to be a seller of fly whisks and canes. From there onward his beat included the most fashionable district of Cairo and the doorsteps upon which he slept were almost clean.




However, Abdul had a quick eye to the comforts of life and this brought him to his new job. He became a car-sleeper. That is how I met him. He was undoubtedly the best sleeper-in-a-car in Cairo. His proficiency as a sleeper was marked, but what I observed most was his uncanny knack of always being on the spot. Whatever the hour or whatever the place I had only to shout luodly "Abdul, Abdul, Abdul !" and he would appear. Sometimes I wondered if it was not someone else called Abdul who used to appear. My suspicions are still unquieted for the other day I left my car at my usual place and shouted "Abdul !". A dark shadow appeared from nowhere. "A right, Major". I always admired the conviction with which he could see a pip as a crown. This night I looked at him hard.

"You're not Abdul ?" I said.

"Yes" he replied.

"You're not Abdul ?" I repeated vehemently.

"Yes".

"No, you're not".

He broke under this devastating cross-examination.

"Me Abdul's friend".

"Where's Abdul ?".

"In prison".

"Why ?".

"Fighting".

Well done, Abdul. I like to think that his success had at last permitted him to indulge himself in the pleasures of life. When the democracies have triumphed and the peoples of the free countries are living and mingling in prosperity and harmony, I like to think that Abdul may visit London. I like to think that his fighting qualities and his flare for street life will enable him to join the elect and become a member of the "Cup Tie Night Bow Street Club."

# *They do it this way* ——— *When you find them !*

Parched desert, hot dried-up winds, then green palm trees and the smell of cool water at hand. — Native tom-toms...

The made-up roadway leading to the Oasis was just wide enough to take our three cars in single file. A slip would have meant a fall into one of the salt beds on either side. As it was, dried palm leaves had been put down to fill up the many holes in the sides of the road. Just ahead lay a mass of foliage, many shades of green, clustering together as if for protection from the desert.

The plunge into the shade of the Oasis was pleasant after the glare of the afternoon sun. As George remarked when we were jolting over the bumps of the earthen road, "The value of such coolth knoweth no man until he has experienced something like this."



So close grew the date palms and other fruit bearing trees and vines that branches had to be held back to allow the passage of our retinue, and finally the clearance for the "Car Park" was so small that it would just take our three cars and no more.

We got out of the cars with the palm trees waving overhead and the hot wind of the desert toned down to a gentle breeze and were conducted along a narrow path. We were actually remarking on the contrast of a few minutes ago when we were met by our hosts, the sheiks and chieftains of the surrounding country. If we saluted and shook hands once, we did so twenty times now, each time both sides saying, in their own language, something appropriate to the occasion.

Most of these leaders of men were dressed in white, clean flowing simple robes, but one or two were in colours. The brown features of our hosts were particularly striking, they were kindly but firm. Of few words, these men of the desert spoke only their own tongue. We found this out when George, trying gallantly to break a slightly awkward pause came out with "Quaies Oasis !" and was received in the gravest silence. Our hosts just did not understand it either. However, thereafter we chatted freely and, with appropriate gestures, indicated the pleasure we felt at our surroundings. One old, grizzly Chieftain was said to have two thousand golden sovereigns buried beneath the sand somewhere in the vicinity.

Walking slowly on we came to where the foliage thinned and here a pleasant coolness struck the air and we came out into a clearing. Nearly the whole of the clearing was taken up by a circular pool, the edges of which had been finished in stone, and round the pool had been placed carpets of various reddish tints — Down the centre of each carpet ran a long low table on which were piled in great profusion, grapes, green figs, dates, pomgranates and melon. Surely a feast for kings.

"Arabian Nights !" piped George in a fit of ecstasy, "and our hosts are certainly Arabian K-nights. Ha, Ha !" An un-understanding silence greeted him but he continued unabashed, "Cheerio, everybody !" This brought a smile.

We arranged ourselves on the carpets. I found myself seated next to the local doctor, who spoke English, and he told me something of the native customs as we sat by the water and ate the fruit before us.

Apparently it was not done to point the soles of your feet at your host, or at anyone else for that matter — squatting on the carpet with so many of our good hosts around us, this was not easy to comply with — we could only hope that they understood — and I realised for the first time how extra convenient chairs really were, for they automatically put the soles of your feet on the ground.

The fruit was excellent, super excellent, but what to do with the skins, the stones and the pips ? For there were no plates. Those of my companions who were lucky enough to be sitting with their backs to the palms, I noticed, threw their debris — not without some trepidation — over their shoulders into the greenery behind. Being on the pool side I was not so lucky, for if I threw my rubbish into the water, I felt that I might be creating some serious breach of etiquette, and once they were floating on the water I could not retrieve them without considerable loss of dignity.

I therefore amassed a handful of juicy skins, pips and other bits and pieces until the doctor, having pity on me, called for a plate, whereupon George disclosed *his* hand which contained even more stones, grape stalks and whatnots, than mine had. At the same time the other guests on the water side welcomed the plate with open hands.

It was at this point that native servants entered bearing the pièce de résistance, the top of a palm tree — standing some two feet in height it was roughly cone shaped and white in colour. It is considered a great delicacy and we in our turn felt highly honoured that it should be produced for us. Actually, once the top is cut off, the tree dies so, as the doctor pointed out, they only take it from trees which have ceased to bear fruit. Having inspected this delicacy in the whole, it was chopped up and served in small pieces, and indeed, it came up to reputation. It was soft to eat, not fibrous or stringy as one might have expected, and it had a flavour much akin to walnuts.

Then came glasses of the most delicious, cool lemonade made from pure limes, followed by liquor glasses of red tea flavoured with mint. These people surely know the art of keeping cool in such weather.

And then the entertainment began (as *if* the feasting were not enough in itself.) Four native boys gave an exhibition of diving into the pool from palm trees. They swam on the surface and under-water, and performed general water antics — and as they finished — beautifully timed — came the village band. A tom-tom played as only natives can, a really sweet-noted flute and, for the rest, the beating of one stick or bone against another.

"Can we clap ?" I asked the doctor, remembering from the days of my youth that if you clap pigmies it is a sign of disapproval and wondering vaguely if the same applied here. "By all means," the doctor assured me and we clapped heartily and long. This caused visible pleasure, not only to our hosts, but to the band. They rendered it all over again.

Then the band got really animated. It began singing native folk songs and, on a sign from one of our hosts, broke into folk dancing. At this point we got up from the carpets and I soon saw George, deep in a gesticulating conversation with an old chieftain, trying to find out what it was all about.

Personally I was glad to stretch my legs and was pleased when one of the sheiks asked two or three of us if we would care to inspect the imported fish in the salt lake.

We passed the most carefully tended vines, walked through the most luxuriant foliage and arrived at the edge of the lake. The sheik gave us his story through the doctor. —

"The fishes are from Italy. Imported to eat the mosquitos. Not very big fishes," he explained, "or the villagers would fish for them and eat them up. No !... only little fishes, one inch, perhaps two inch long — no more."

As the huge orb of the sun dipped below the horizon, we said our good-byes and wended our way back to the cars. As we did so, fruit was pressed into our hands.

We had received all the hospitality known to these good people — and what hospitality it had been. We felt indeed grateful.

And then we woke up ? — No. It had all been true. And on this Middle East Front of ours too, not so very far back either.

As George remarked as we drove away, "Talk about Sanctum Sanctorum, that was a real Oasis Oasium."

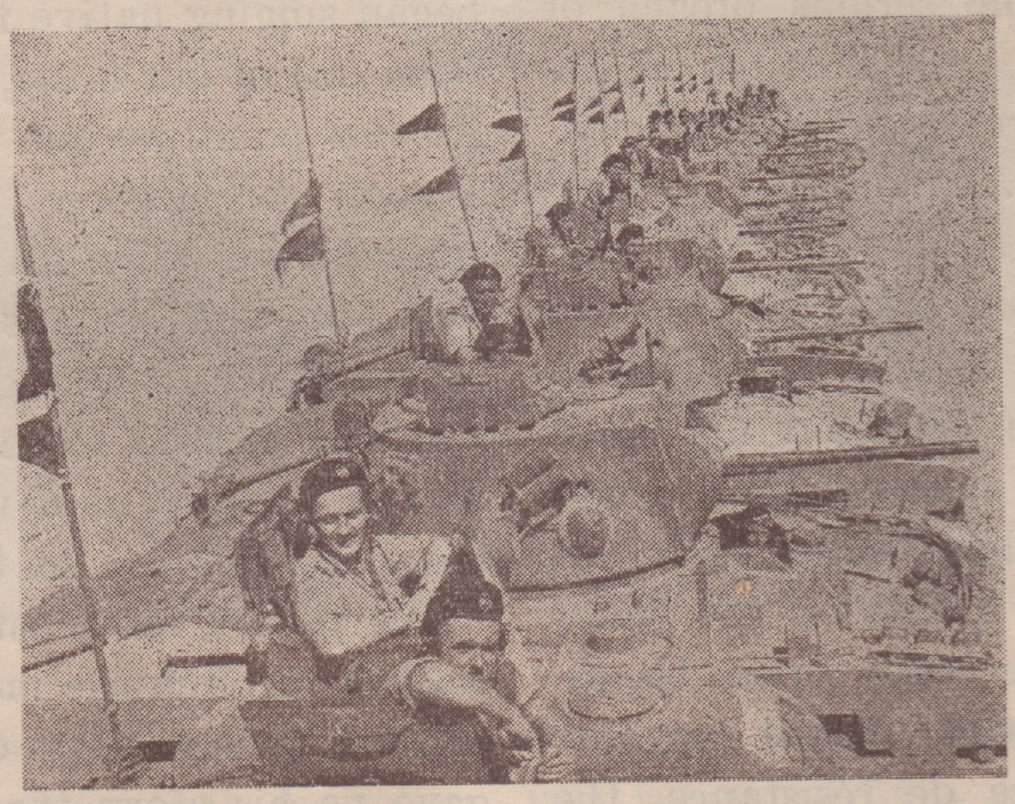


# "ARM'D DIV."



At the end of 1938, the only really mobile Signals in EGYPT was a company of Egypt Signals, commanded by Major "Ben" Walford. In January 1939, it was decided to form Egypt Mobile Division, and what was originally part of "A" Section, was formed into A wireless troop with a motley collection of assorted 15 cwts., to be responsible for Divisional communications. This troop thrived under the leadership of "Uncle" Blum and Andy and eventually the whole of the old Cavalry Bde Signals, including a troop known as the "gallupin' — eighth !" joined in.

The next question which arose was this ; "It's all very nice to have an ex cavalry Bde. signal squadron, and a lot of nice, well-trained signal troops, plus quite a lot of famous officers, but who is going to run the bloomin' thing ?" This problem was solved by the advent of Major Mathew, O.B.E.,M.C., from the U.K., to take over, with Capt. Crawford as adjutant and the famous Monty Hepburn as Q.M. Some N.C.O.'s and men were also produced, and Egypt Mobile Divisional Signal began its career.



Not long after its formation the Divisional Cmdr. took the Division to the desert for manoeuvres. Thus it was, in February 1939, the unit first took to the sands of the Western Desert, with the first A.C.V.'s and the 15 cwts. of "A" Tp. The joint move was westwards, down the Wadi Farigh to Abu Nilha where an orgy of boggings and unditchings practically caused the C.O. to have a stroke. Onwards. to Hemeimat (that strangely beautiful country) and thence to Fuka and our camp by the seashore at Gerawla. Here the unit was "broken in", performing miracles with its inadequate equipment and insufficiencies of personnel. Many were the trials and tribulations of that little body ; only those who were there will read, and will remember.

The work of training and equipping went on steadily, and in May Whitters arrived from England and joined No. 2 Sqn. and a troop was provided with four A.C.V.'s and some Armd. cars to pride the main comns. for the staff. The question of having a constant split between Adv Div and Rear Div had not then arisen ; occasionally, they broke apart in a huff, and AQ sulked in the background for the afternoon, but as soon as darkness approached rushed up again to join the good old G staff and the Officers' Mess. Consequently, Rear HQ Tp did not exist, and all the Div. comns. were provided by A Tp. But *they* could take it !

In August, 1939, when it was pretty obvious to all and sundry that war was imminent, The Division was moved back to its old training ground, near Matruh. At first, Div HQ was well up but in early September it moved back to the palm groves and sat tight till the end of the month. Visions of "Willie" Pape up the pole, with "Uncle" Blum in typical attitude, hands on hips and insolent leer, talking to Sheehah Effendi at the bottom still come to me ! In early October, Div HQ moved on the Matruh — Barrani Rd and there "Willie" Pape and another pole were again prominent. "Uncle" had left us, however, and Capt. McKean had arrived to command No. 1 Sqn.

Until December, a great deal of valuable training was carried out and much experience gained. Many incidents come to mind ; the great storm, which swept all our tentage flat and turned the desert into a veritable bog, and how our newly arrived second in command, then Maj. Bagnold, successfully



*...destined at last for active service.*

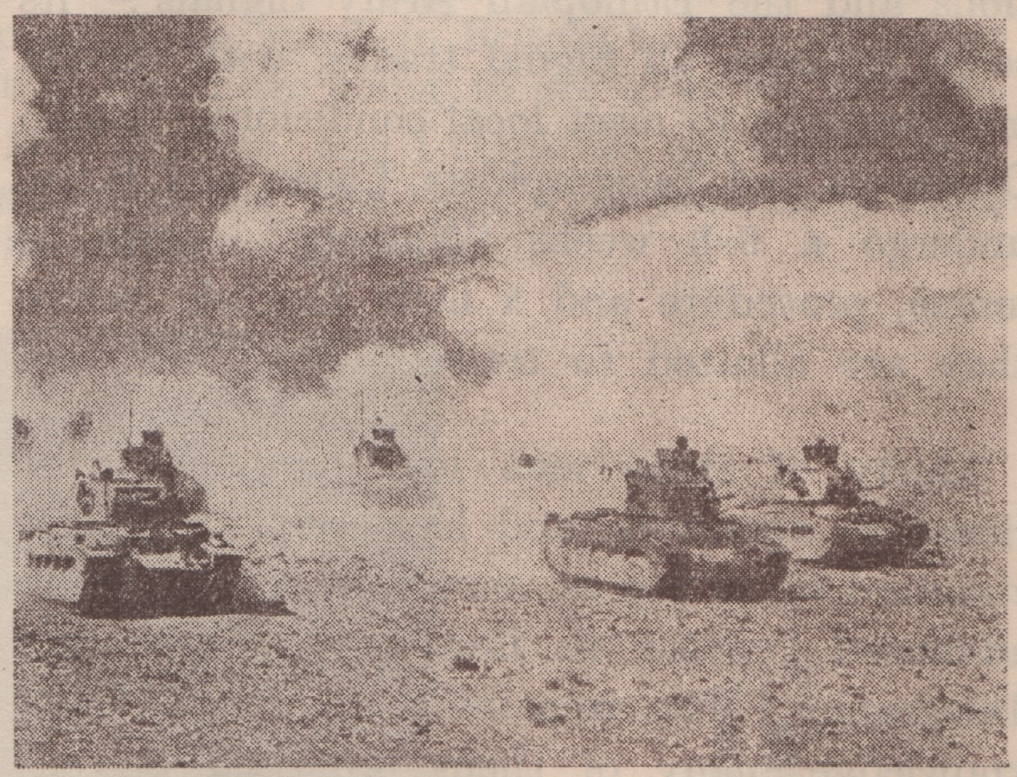
directed draining operations ; the great fire of 1939 in the cookhouse ; the inspection of the Division by King Farouk ; our multitudinous desert schemes.

Early in '40, Lt. Tait arrived from Rhodesia with a band of Rhodesian signallers who were given to Support group. Major Sanders arrived to command No. 1 Sqn. and "Boozy" came back to Don. We were all re-numbered and re-named throughout, and for the first time a figure appeared, replacing the time-worn "Egypt". We were now a pukkah Armoured Divisional Signals ! — we reckoned there was nothing to touch us. Our tails were right up, and under the joint symbols of Jimmy and the Jerboa we moved up to the desert in May 1940 — destined at last for active service. All our training and careful organising of the past years was at last to be put to the test.

When Italy entered the war, Div. HQ set off at dawn for Sidi Barrani and the next day went on to Buq Buq. The Armoured Bdes and their Sqns. spent an uncomfortable and never to be forgotten summer on top of the escarpment near the wire, whilst the Sp. Gp. looked after Sollum. X Tp. had the honour to serve with the Hussars, and did them proud, too, and spent the rest of the year in action more or less continuously. A sterling lot, and no one could have done better.

Capt. Stevenson got tired of being a captain and became a major (will foreign papers please copy? ) Andy took up his post in the Adjutant's office and Col. Knowles took over command. In September we went back from the Barrani area to positions south of Matruh. All except "Sugar Tait and his band who stayed behind to hold the fort. A special word of praise is due to the Rhodesians, who were never out of the line until the end of the first Libyan campaign. We pottered about until December, when the great offensive against the armies of the "wop" began. We went into our first major action. Continuously on the move until our arrival in Benghasi ; many hardships were endured without a murmur. There were sandstorms, there was rain, and through it all there was not one signal "blob" of any real impor tance.

Having handed over to our successors, we bade good-bye and set off across country for home. Going back, we realised how far we had come. We covered 800 miles, and it took us 10 days.



*We went into our first major action. Continuously on the move until our arrival in Benghasi.*

Once more, we are back at the old stamping grounds. Who knows, Benghasi may yet see us again. But, whatever happens, I don't think anyone who has served with the unit will not look back with pride.

And that's a big thing.



# Rebirth of an Empire

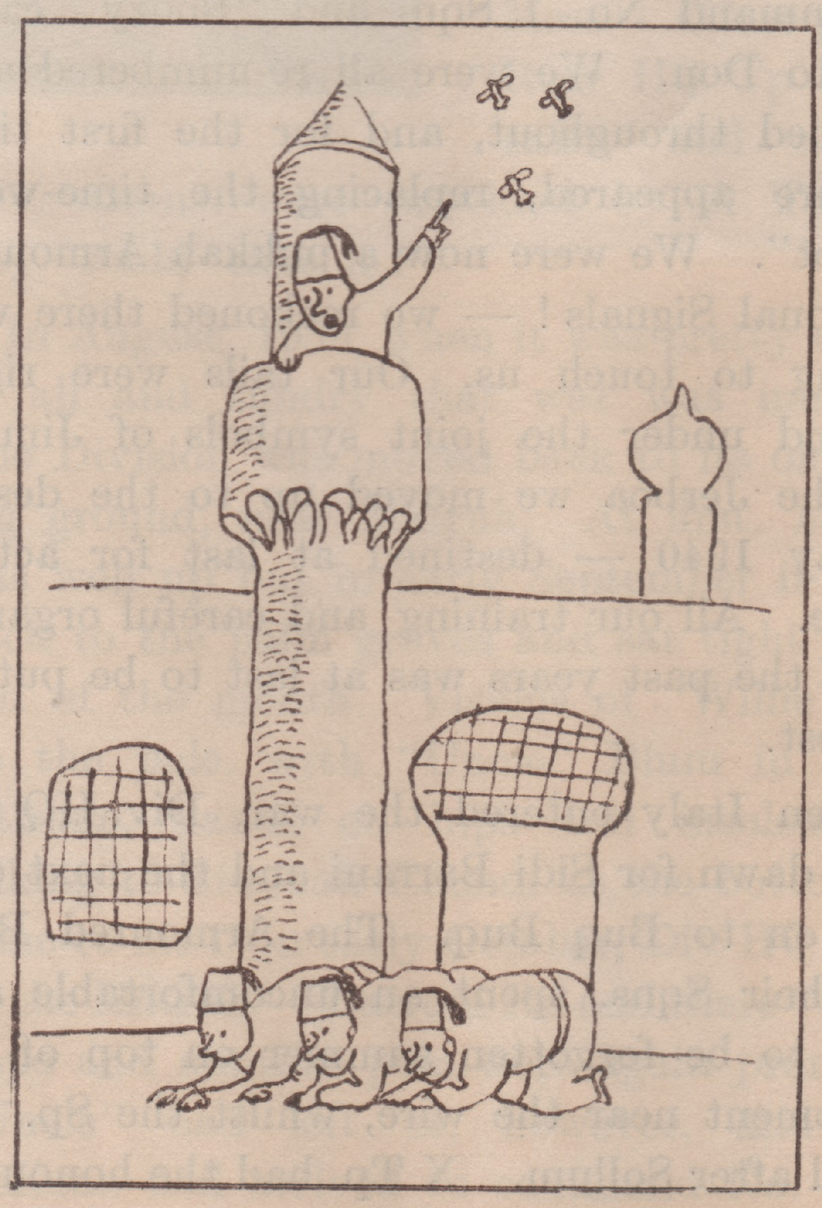
How would fare a school wherein all instruction had to be done in a language foreign both to instructors and scholars ? The answer, or at least an answer is in the Ethiopian Signal Training School in Addis Ababa. Strangely enough, the language problem, which loomed so largely across our sky at first, has proved the least of our difficulties.

The school was formed in July 1941 to train Abyssinians for the Civil Communications and the Ethiopian Army Signals ; its scope includes all Signal trades, with certain modifications to meet local conditions. Radio Operators and Telegraphists, Clerks and E.S.s, undergo a 6–8 weeks "Nursery" course of morse, procedure and a little English, before they are allotted to trades.

Thirty of these men had previous experience as operators, and have now reached a standard of 25 w.p.m., now they are receiving advanced training in Electricity, Radio and Telegraphy. The remainder, in spite of the knowledge many of them professed on enrollment, have in effect started from scratch. The best can now after 8 weeks, read up to 15 w.p.m., not spectacular, but we are quite pleased with them. Those who have no aptitude for morse, but still show intelligence, are turned into clerks and mysteries such as Signal Registers soon show up the hopelessly dimwitted. In all categories writing is the bridge of asses at which a proportion stick ; but they are fortunately few, and in most cases calligraphy is looking less and less as though the writer has used his feet.

Of the men with previous experience, some worked for about a month on live links under British ranks' supervision. When not on sets they received instructions in elementary — very elementary — electricity. The speed with which they learned was most heartening — only equalled, in fact, by the speed with which they forgot ! This, of course, was due to running through the syllabus too quickly, and was soon remedied.

Battered corners and gateposts testify the early trials of the long suffering sergeant whose task it is to train the Drivers and D.Rs. That these men, besides being now good drivers, are well trained in map-reading and everything else a D.R. should know, is a great tribute to their instructor who speaks nothing but English. Most of the other instruction is done in French and Italian, and if these fail to reach the whole class, an interpreter can always be found. Knowledge of English is unfortunately rare, and where an English interpreter can be found, he usually lets zeal outrun his performance. English forms a part of the syllabus throughout the course



From the point of view of organization, the Linemen are our Nightmare No. 1. They are nearly always out on a line, and owing to their haphazard ways, nobody ever knows exactly how many we have. But here too, as the weeding-out continues, some idea of the desirability of discipline and regular work is being instilled into even the most unskilled. They have already done very useful work, and twelve of them have been, or are being trained as foremen; some of these have already taken over rest-points. Their English is limited to such phrases as "Give me a dis on 3 and 4"; of little use for passing the time of day, but invaluable for testing lines.

A succession of inspections by some very senior officers culminated in a visit by the Emperor. His Majesty saw the men in all stages of training, and, before he left gave a short address; Royal interest has undoubtedly stimulated the mens' work, and palliated the inconvenience of working a radio station remote from their homes.

The best radio operators are now working on the first live link in the Civil Communications network — a small beginning from which, as more men reach the required standard, will be built up the nerve system of the Ethiopian Empire.

# The Home Front

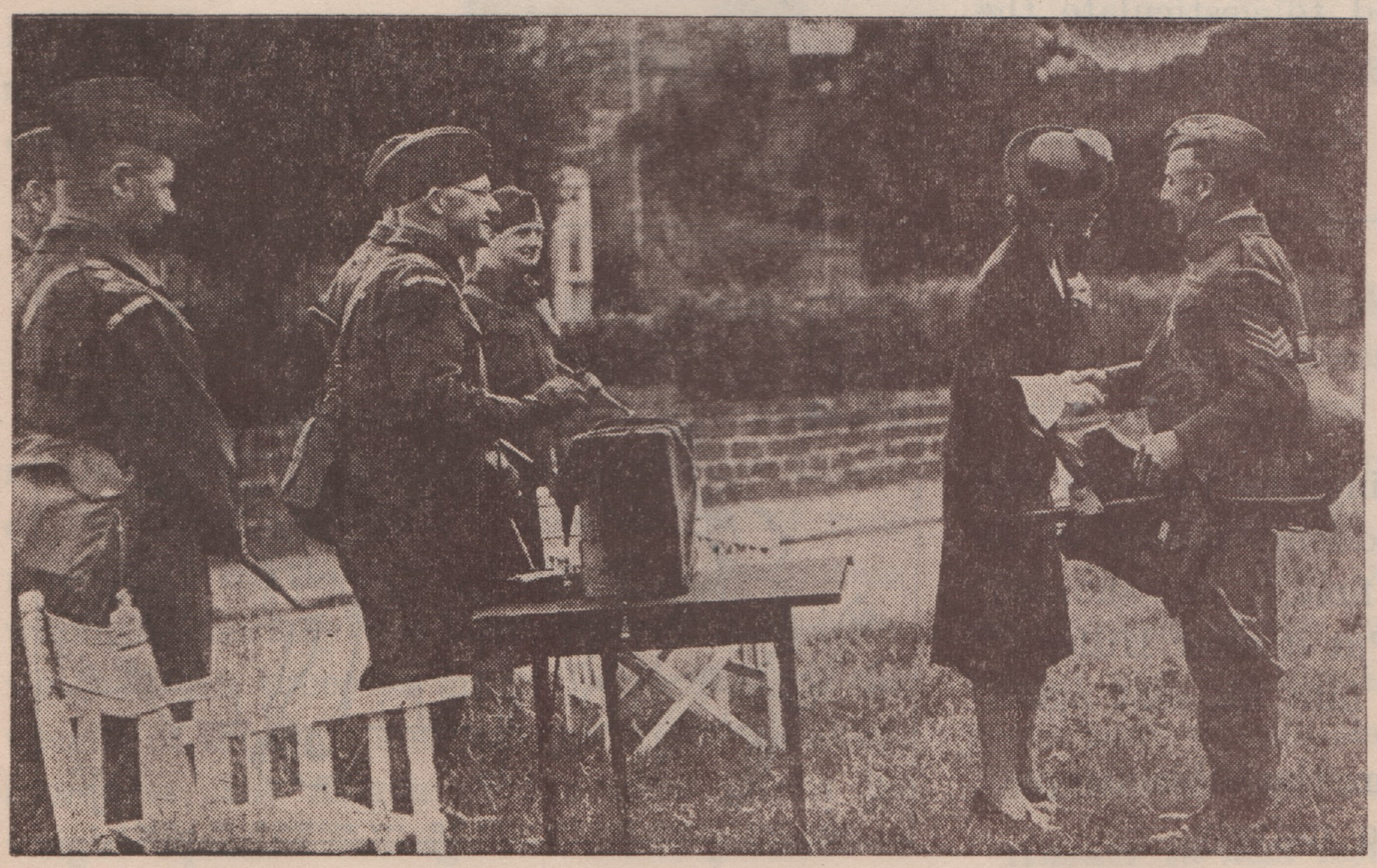
Sgt. "X", of the Home Guard, is here seen receiving the local Marksmanship Trophy won by his Section "somewhere in Yorkshire".

Quite a few will recognize him as Major "X", Royal Signals T.A., from which he retired on reaching the age limit shortly before the War.

It takes more than that to stop a Yorkshire man from doing a job, so he joined the Home Guard along with his Colonel as a private, and we understand he is more proud now of his third tape and section of "old sweats" than he was of his company, crown and last war report: and they were no duds, either.

His letter states "we all stand our turns on night duty and everyone is immensely keen". That is typical of the spirit in Britain today; the spirit of the men who won the last war and are going to see to it we win this.

There are one and a half million of them, and I think we can safely back them to take care of our homes against the Nazi and what remains of those eight million bayonet owners belonging to Mussolini.



# Haw Haw !

The Lybian Show was on... Musso was disconsolate... He sat in his palazzo while his bambini marched up and down outside... He had no appetite for his spaghetti... Twice he had sent away the excellent waiter with the macaroni.

Vs had been plastered all over the place, on the palazzo walls even up his magnificent staircase... and only that morning he had opened his supa-rolla-toppa-deska to finda a "V" inside it.

"Maledetto," he said... He said other things as well, but this is a nice journal. Suddenly he made a gesture with his hands. As if by magic Ciano appeared.

Musso pierced him with a glance. Ciano was about to say something but kept silent, which was strange, for he was an Italian.

Suddenly Musso spoke, "Why you do nothing ?" He bellowed, "Vs everywhere, even in the palazzo Venezia — why, WHY ?"

The Conte hid a smile behind a gloved hand. "You spell it that way." he ventured.

Again Musso pierced him with a glance. He would have taken his revenge but he realised in time that there was a V in that too. Instead he boomed, "We must have help. Send this telegram to the Maestro Hitler," and he proceeded to gesticulate the message.

When it was written down, the message read like this :—

HITLER
RIBBENTROP
MUSSOLINI
CIANO

As Ciano finished reading the message out to him, Dictator No. 2 suddenly sprang to his feet. "Put my name first." he shouted. Then he paused. "No. Put it after Hitler's," he said quietly and sank into his seat again.

"And will that please him, the Ribbentroppo, No ?" inquired the Conte naively.

"Perhaps not, but he is a long way off," said Musso, and left it at that.

So the telegram went, just the names of the two Dictators and their Foreign Secretaries.

HITLER - RIBBENTROP
MUSSOLINI - CIANO

Hilter was making a speech when the message was delivered so the message was delivered to Ribbentrop.

"Go !" said Ribbentrop to the two dozen or so officers standing round him. There was a thunderous "click-clack" as the two dozen or so right turned as one man. Then they goose-stepped in perfect formation out of the room. The door closed as if by numbers. Then Ribbentrop opened the telegram.

" Blitzendivenbombenchildrengotterdammerung." he exclaimed. Just like that. He rang the bell and sent the messenger who had brought the telegram to a concentration camp. Then he sat down and proceeded to decode the message.

One by one he re-arranged the letters of the message until he had used every letter once. Try as he would he could find No other solution.

"The Fuehrer wont like this," he thought as he wrote out the message in clear for Hitler to read. It ran as follows :—

IN MOCH NASTI TROBBLE
I LOSE I RUN
R.I.P.



# PIECES

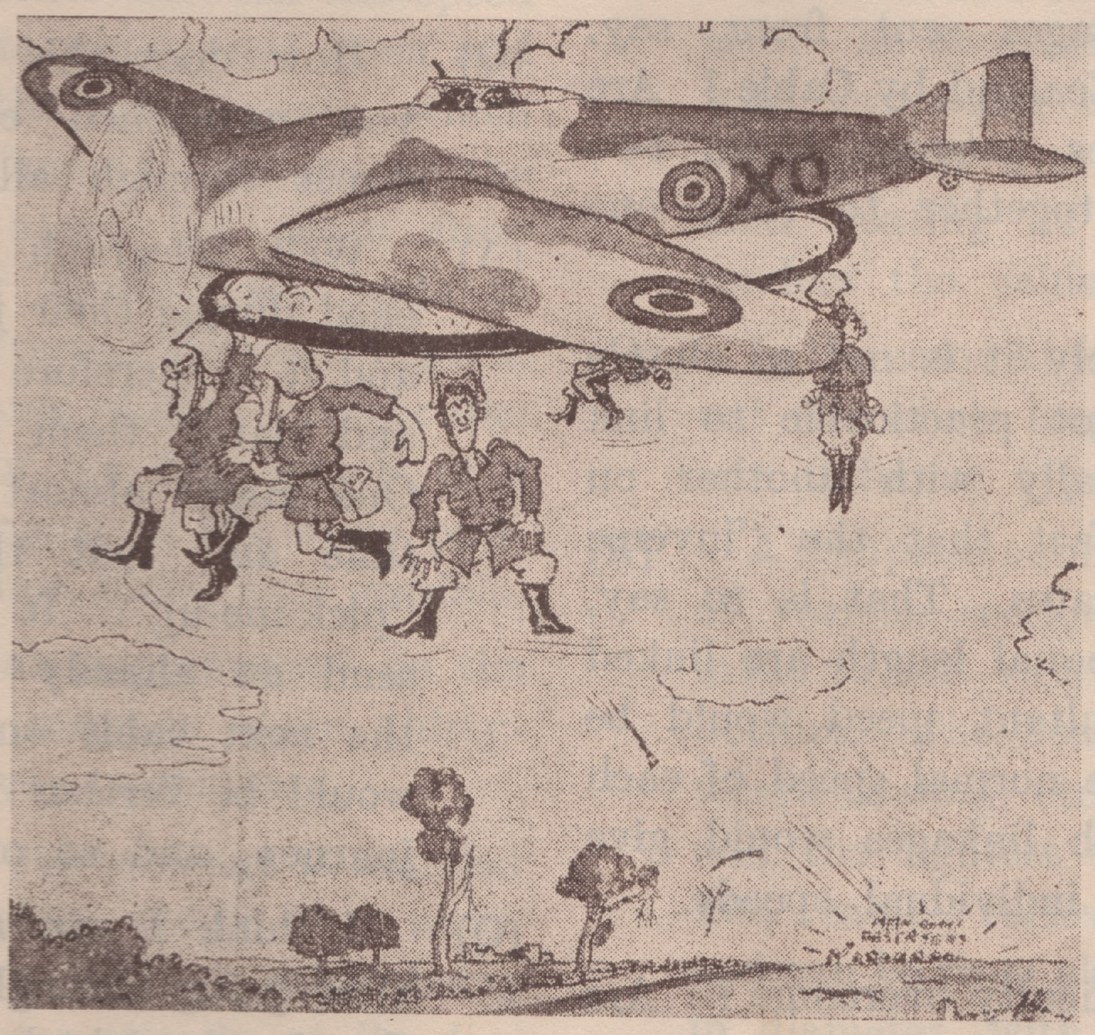
## The Chronicles of Jerboa

**by BARON HABATA**

Once upon a time there was a very strict Commanding Officer and a very decent Adjutant. They sat together in a large office surrounded by cupboards full of secret documents, so full that they groaned every time the office door was opened. Occasionally one burst open, and the decent Adjutant could get no work done for trying to convince the strict C.O. that he hadn't lost anything.

This happened frequently, so on the whole nothing much was accomplished.

One fine day the strict C.O. said "Let the trumpets blow and let there be stables and let every man, even my two barbary Squadron Commanders, be there". This was all very well, but there was neither trumpeter nor stables; only a large tin garage full of noisy lorries and drivers, and a otl of oil and water. All the same at 12 o'clock sharp the trumpet blew, the strict C.O. leapt to his feet, the secret cupboard burst open, and the decent Adjutant clapped his hands to his head, and all the secret documents sailed past him out of the window.




*Actually, old boy, it was for attracting mines!*

Eagerly the very strict C.O. swept from his office and made straight for the big tin garage. The usual noise and commotion came from within, there was even more oil and more water about, but no barbary Squadron Leaders. Full of wrath the strict Commanding Officer went along to where the two B's (as they were called) had their abode. There he found many defaulters, receiving much punishment, when of course all of them should have been in "stables".

So the very strict Commanding Officer made the trumpets blow once more, and when the hosts aad assembled, he spoke very seriously to them on the matter.

On future mornings the trumpets blew, making a loud noise so that all could hear and everyone, whether officer or defaulter, immediately put on his grease-stained dungarees and proceeded poste haste to the garage. M.T. Stables in Egypt had come to stay.

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## Monkey Business

A monkey was swinging on a rope with its mother, and it so happened that the length of the rope was equal to the weight of rope multiplied by the age of the monkeys mother when the monkey was born. Also the monkey weighed ten times as much as the sum of the weight of the rope and the age of the monkey, moreover, the length of the rope minus its weight equalled the age the monkeys mother will be when the monkey is as old as the mother is now. The difference between the weight of the monkey and the length of the rope was equal to the product of the monkeys mothers age and the sum of the weight of the rope and the age of the monkey. Finally, the product of the length of the rope per unit weight and the monkeys mothers age in three years time equals the weight of the monkey.

What was the weight of the monkey?

*Answer in next issue — if we can work it out ourselves!*

# The Romance of Submarine Cable

## A SERIES OF TALKS WITH THE MANAGER MESSRS. CABLES AND WIRELESS LTD.

(Q) I suppose the tremendous strides which have been made in Wireless during the past few years have rather overshadowed the importance of Cables as far as the public are concerned.

(A) That is so. The submarine cable is one of the wonders of modern science at which the world has ceased to wonder. A message is handed in at a telegraph office, and there, so far as we are concerned, is an end of it.

(Q) How are messages sent from, say, England to New Zealand by Cable ? Are the various cables between those two countries joined together to form one long cable ?

(A) No, unfortunately it is not so simple as that. It is not practicable to link one cable physically with another on account of the fact that the "inverse square" law operates. That is to say, if two cables of equal length are linked together, the resultant speed would be one-quarter of the normal speed of each cable. Three such linkages would give one-ninth of the individual speeds.

(Q) How is that difficulty overcome ? Are messages received and re-translated by hand at each cable junction, until they reach their destinations ?

(A) That used to be the method in earlier days, when a message between England and New Zealand was handled no fewer than thirty-eight times, namely, twice by receiving and despatching operators at nineteen different stations en route. To-day a signal from England to New Zealand by cable can actually be transmitted in about one second without the intervention of any human agency on the way, a feat made possible by what is called the "Regenerator" at the intermediate stations.

(Q) How many intermediate stations are there between England and New Zea land ?

(A) There are several cable routes to New Zealand, but a typical route is this — London, Porthcurno, Madeira, St. Vincent, Ascension, St. Helena, Capetown, Durban, Mauritius, Rodriguez, Cocos Island, Perth Adelaide, Sydney and Wellington — fourteen sections in all.

(Q) How does this "Regenerator" which you mentioned enable you to work direct through all those stations ?

(A) Well, telegraph signals become weakened during their journey along a cable, and it is therefore necessary to reinforce and clarify them at the relay stations. One might almost say it is sundowner time and that the signals require a "pick-me-up". It would never do to send an already weakened signal into the next cable on the chain, where it would be further weakened on its next journey, and so on.

(Q) I think I can see that. You mean, after going through two or three cables, the signal might be so weak as not to be there at all. Is that it ?

(A) Precisely, and the function of the "Regenerator" is to chop into the middle of each dot or dash, on its arrival, and to send on a brand new signal, perfectly formed, into the next cable. The principle is like the provision of a razor edge which is adjusted to chop regularly and precisely into the centre of each received beat, which is the point least affected by distortion.

(Q) Do you mean then that the receiving instruments at each station can chop

exactly into the middle of each dot and dash on arrival ?

(A) Yes.

(Q) But how is it possible to synchronise the speed of all the instruments at all those different stations so that at every station they come in at exactly the right fraction of a second ?

(A) The speed of the instruments all along the line is controlled by electrical clocks at each station. These normally vary by only one-fifth of a second daily. But even this is not sufficiently accurate, for clocks at all stations cannot be expected to vary at the same rate, or in the same direction ; so a most ingenious device known as the synchronising unit arranges things so that the signals themselves correct any difference between the speed of the instruments which send them and the speed of the instruments which receive them. Thus the motors of the instruments all along the chain from England to New Zealand are made to run not only at precisely the same speed, but also in the same phase — rather like the tyre valves of the four wheels of a motor-car, all keeping in the same position at the same time, if this were possible.

(Q) That is rather an improvement on the handling of the message some thirty-eight times, as you mentioned.

(A) Yes. In brief, the message is handled only once in London, and is then automatically sent from cable to cable, being finally printed automatically at its destination, with no human handling all along the chain.

(Q) But of course you have to have watch-keepers at the various relay stations to ensure that everything is functioning correctly ?

(A) Even that is done automatically, for "automatic scrutineers", as they are called, are employed at the "Regenerator" stations. These provide that, if the quality of the passing signals deteriorates beyond certain limits of tolerance, audible and visible warning by means of a bell and a lamp are given, calling the attention of the responsible technician, before errors are probable, to the deterioration which has taken place. The technical officer can then attend to the circuit whilst traffic is still flowing.

(Q) All that is quite different from my conception of cable working. Now, can you tell us something of the way in which a submarine cable is made ? What does it consist of ?

(A) A cable consists of stranded copper conductor, surrounded by gutta-percha insulator, and these form the core of a cable. Over this is laid a serving of jute yarn, which acts as a cushion or buffer between the core and the sheathing wires. These wires are of galvanised iron or steel, and form the main protection. To complete the cable it is served with two outer coverings of jute yarn, impregnated with a preservative, and a final coating of preserving compound renders the cable ready for use.

(Q) Is the same kind of cable used throughout the whole length of a cable, or have you different types ?

(A) A complete submarine cable is made up of various sections, each section being made to suit varying conditions of ocean bottom. The heaviest is at shore ends, where chafing, etc., is most experienced, and the lightest for deep sea portions. The cable varies according to type, and can be from about one to three inches in diameter, with a weight of anything from one to thirty tons per mile.

(Q) What is the cost of laying a cable ?

(A) The deep sea type of cable works out at about £ 200 per mile. Shore end is, of course, much more expensive. A cable across the Atlantic would cost over £ 1,800,000 to make and lay. About 4,000,000 lb. of copper, 1,800,000 lb. of gutta-percha and some 80,000 miles of steel and iron wires would be used in its manufacture.

(Q) What is the longest single length of cable in the world ?

(A) Our cable from Vancouver, British Columbia, to Fanning Island, in mid-Pacific, is the longest single length of cable in the world, and is 3,458 nautical miles in length. This cable lies at great depths, the soundings for the major part of the route being from 2,800 to 3,000 fathoms, a depth of over three miles.

(Q) I suppose that you have records of conditions at the bottom of the sea from cable-laying surveys. Can you give us some details of ocean depths, pressures, temperatures and so on ?

(A) The greatest ocean depth at present known is 5,348 fathoms, or over six miles. This is in Swire Deep, off the Island of Mindanao, in the Philippines. Mount Everest could be sunk in this vast hole, with room for Mount Snowdon on top, and still leave enough water to float the Queen Mary.

(Q) That certainly sounds deep enough. Have you any idea what it is like down there ?

(A) Well, below 100 fathoms the waves and surface currents have little effect, and below 600 fathoms no ray of light penetrates, and all is blackness. So far as is known at present, there is little animal or vegetable life below the 2,000 fathom line. You see, the pressure increases by 1 lb. for every $2^1/_4$ feet of water, and the average pressure on the Atlantic cables is about 3 tons per square inch. The bottom temperatures of all the great oceans closely approach freezing point.

(Q) That sounds far from pleasant. Tell me, what are the main causes of cables breaking, or developing faults.

(A) Chafing and corrosion may cause a fault or break, or a ship's anchor fouling the cable would probably go right throught it. Marine growth clinging to the cable is sometimes the cause of early corrosion, and in some waters rapid corrosion is brought about by chemical action set up through green and black mud. Kinks are also common causes of faults, and bad ones may decentralise the core. Submarine earthquakes also cause trouble at times.

(Q) Do you get any trouble from submarine animal life ?

(A) Yes. Certain fish attack the cables, and there is a troublesome boring worm called the teredo, which seems to take a delight in gnawing its way through anything that mere humans can think of covering the cable with, in order to keep him out. This worm apparently finds the gutta-percha insulation highly palatable, and eats its way right through to the copper conductor, causing faults to be set up in the cable.

(Q) He seems to be a nasty little fellow. What are the strangest types of fault that you have heard of ?

(A) Well, we have had a case of a ship sinking on the top of a cable. Another case of a whale, which was found strangled in one of our cables, and a shark's tooth was on another occasion found embedded in the cable. He evidently mistook it for a conger eel, which he hoped to have for his supper.

(Q) I suppose one of the most interesting sides of cable engineering is the laying and repair work. Have you had any experience in that branch ?

(A) Yes. The work of the cable companies is not confined to the sending and receiving of messages, great as that task is. Thousands of miles of cable lying on the ocean bed require constant care and vigilance, and the work of repairing worn and damaged cables demands a large and ever watchful organisation. Cable repair ships are therefore stationed at strategic points on our system, ready to steam out of harbour at a few hours' notice.

(Q) It must be most interesting and exceedingly accurate work, this fishing up of a cable from the bottom of the sea, repairing it, and letting it fall again. How do you localise faults and breaks in cables ?

(A) As you can imagine, faults and breaks can be of widely different types, each necessitating special methods of treatment. For instance, a cable break may leave the copper conductor completely sealed and covered over by the gutta-percha at the point of breakage. On the other hand, quite a considerable area of the copper conductor may be left exposed, and in contact with the salt water; or perhaps only a very small area.

(Q) Which is the most difficult to localise?

(A) Unexpectedly enough, the completely sealed break is the easiest, for we can then take what is known as a capacity test. You see, the copper conductor and the sheathing wires form the two plates of a condenser, and from a measurement of this capacity we are able to determine the exact distance to the break.

(Q) And what about the other form of break, where the conductor is exposed to the salt water?

(A) Salt water is, of course, a conductor of electricity, and this causes the electricity to leak to earth. So here we take a test of electrical resistance, which gives us the resistance of the cable up to the break, plus the resistance of the contact between the copper conductor and the salt water. The "contact resistance" will of course vary widely with the area of the exposure, and this requires considerable experience to estimate. But having allowed for this, we know the resistance of the cable up to the break, from which the position of the break can be readily calculated. Faults are similarly subjected to resistance measurements.

(Q) Does that mean then that you test from both ends of a broken or faulty cable, so that the stations at the two ends can check up on one another?

(A) That is so.

(Q) What happens next?

(A) Tests are next made on the cable between ship and shore, in order to ascertain on which side of the ship the fault lies. Having determined this, the ship buoys the good end, and proceeds to pick up the cable towards the fault. When the fault has been brought in, the cable is cut and a new length is brought up from the tank and spliced in. The ship then steams back to the mark buoy, paying out fresh cable, and the final splice is made to the good end, after full tests have first been made in both directions. Then the splice is lowered overboard, the cable sinks to its resting place and the repair is completed. So ends one of hundreds of similar jobs of work carried out annually in the maintenance of our overseas cable communications.

(Q) Now, before we close, what is in your opinion the most spectacular achievement of your Company in cable working?

(A) Well, the result of the Derby has been received by cable in India before the third horse had passed the post. But undoubtedly the most sensational feat was on the occasion of the opening of the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, when a message was sent by cable right round the world by the King, being re-delivered to His Majesty on the Royal Dails by a messenger boy in 80 seconds from the moment of its despatch, while the assembly was still applauding the actual opening of the Exhibition. The message was in that time sent from the Wembley Exhibition across the Atlantic, across Canada, across the Pacific to Australia, thence via the Indian Ocean to India, through the Mediterranean to Gibraltar, and back to Wembley — a total distance of 31,560 miles. All this by cable only throughout, which should be sufficient proof of the value of the "cable" contribution to Cable and Wireless Limited.

(Q) It most certainly is.

*In the next Issue*
"VIA MARCONI"

# ABYSINNIAN ANECDOTES

The Compaign in Somaliland and Abysinnia presented many communication problems to South African Signal Units in the field.

In retrospect, it is amusing to recall the days when Isiolo was regarded almost as a salient in enemy territory, and Garissa on the Tana River as the front line. Even to those who took part in that amazing advance from Garissa to the Juba River and on through Italian Somaliland to Abysinnia, there seems to have been more than an element of unreality about the whole campaign ; the rapidity of movement and succession of incident has left rather a blurred impression on most minds. Only to those careful souls who submit to the torture of a daily diary, can chronological sequence be secured. To the vast majority times and dates are unimportant, but incidents stand out sharply against a somewhat muddled background. Highlights, like the receipt of a packet of cigarettes in a smokeless army — the miraculous bottle of beer and — but I digress ! These belong to those postwar periods when, suitably primed, someone remarks "Do you remember —— ".

Prior to the "kick off" in February 1941, the construction of permanent line routes to advanced positions was a gruelling preliminary. This was carried out under great difficulties and considerable hardship, through waterless "Nyika" and desert country, where the water problem was a nightmare. Nevertheless one section of an S.A. Signal Unit, with a detachment from the Royal Corps of Signals, performed the amazing feat of erecting $11^1/_2$ miles of permanent line route per diem over a distance of 145 miles, through heavy thorn bush and almost waterless country. The admiration of the toughened South Africans for the remarkable manner in which Royal Corps Signal personnel, — unused to the tropical climate, in an area full of wild animals which must have sometimes proved disturbing o' nights, — stood up to a gruelling task was unbounded. As one burly South African put it "Those little b —— s have got guts !" Than which, no praise from a General could rank higher.

There were certainly troublesome problems in connection with permanent line construction. For one thing, the monkeys appeared to regard the wires as having been erected for their special benefit in certain sections, and made full use of the facilities. What the line maintenance section thought about the resultant faults reached high heaven in English, Afrikaans, Sesuto and Zulu ! Then again, there were the Giraffe. On its full growth it may reach 18 feet in height, and allowing for possible 1 foot in movement, a clearance of 19 feet in the span centre was arrived at. The problem then arose as to which was, or was not "Giraffe Country". Certain complications were introduced by would be humourists alleging they had personally seen Giraffe quite 20 feet in height ! This led to a lot of acrimony, but in the main the clearance provided met the bill. Now and again a Giraffe would fail to observe the rules and wander into "non Giraffe" country, with somewhat disastrous results to communications. These little contretemps caused one to avoid the C.S.O. for a day or so, until matters of greater moment claimed his attention. Another disturbing creature was the Elephant. When these animals become really peeved, they generally remove a few poles, and considerable wire lengths are only worth salvage as pipe cleaners. However, only on two occasions did these fellows really become seriously annoyed. In one area they resented supplies being drawn from their waterhole and proceeded to tell the world nightly, and the construction party personnel in particular, the poor view they took of the matter. This culminated one night in what was variously reported as a mass attack by Elephant bulls coming on in waves, while the gallant soldiery brought them down with rights and lefts from an anti-tank rifle. Discounting the more lurid stories, which were more a credit to an active imagination than strictly in accordance with facts, it seems clear that one bull Elephant went through the camp, chivvied by the troops

in various stages of undress, what time someone took pot shots at the animal with an anti-tank rifle. Its ultimate fate is in doubt, but its death was claimed by a number of aspiring nimrods. From all accounts the incident was sufficiently exciting, and in letters home the experience lost nothing by the telling. A good time was had by all — except the Elephant.

In February 1941, with all set, came that amazing forward move. Across the Juba River — and Gelib with its treacherous use by the enemy of the white flag ; still forward, through that weary stretch of flat scrub-covered and largely waterless country, through roads littered with Italian lorries, burnt out cars, abandoned field guns, shells, postbox hand grenades, rifles and the thousand and one items of impedimenta discarded by a broken and beaten army. Prisoners anxious to surrender and meeting with entire lack of enthusiasm from the moving troops. Some were plaintive in their appeals to be taken prisoner — defeat, thirst and an empty stomach proving too much for their high sounding slogans — "Believe, Obey, Fight" and such like. The amount of "blah" with Mussolinis African Army was astonishing. On our way, over hundreds of miles, one caught an occasional glimpse of sanddunes, golden in the shimmering heat, providing local colour, even to the camels moving along the dunes. Incidentally, the camels in those regions were far superior looking animals to the Egyptian variety.

Then Modun, shattered by Naval guns from the sea, where enemy dead, all too lightly buried, provided an evil savour, and the mournful and nightlong howls of numerous hyaenas sounded a reuiem.

Helping ourselves to petrol from an Italian bowser, we proceeded, according to plan. Merca with its "Albergo Banana del Or ;" the mysterious battlements of the village on its rocky sea shore, fit abodes for pirates and slavers. Sinister apertures in the walls conjuring up noisome dungeons and favourites of the harem put to the bowstring ; all the infinite mystery of the East — or rather its evil and its smells. On again to Magadiscio, with towering Radio masts in half a dozen places — a distant view of palms, glittering white domes and minarets lending enchantment — The "Albergo Croce del Sud", the "Circolo Duchessa d'Aosta" and a dozen others. Fair sounding names, invoking thoughts of Drake and the Spanish Main, doubloons and pieces of eight ! The realities, alas — smells, and smells and more smells. Without a doubt, an Italian's idea of sanitation, hygiene, and elementary cleanliness would bring a blush to the cheek of an occupant of a "pondokkie" on the Cape flats. Coupled with this was a dank atmosphere which resulted in a 24 hour bath of perspiration and curses not loud, but deep. For a time fresh meat was naturally scarce at Mogadiscio, and early issues were hardly from stallfed animals. It having been noised abroad in the usual manner that camel meat was to be issued, everyone viewed the initial issues with a suspicious eye. One signaller's remark that "I never saw a b—ox with ribs that length" caused a section to become voluntary vegetarians, despite remonstrances by an indignant C.Q.M.S.

Forward again to the Abysinnian border, leaving "MOG" to stew in its own juice. Magnificient tarred road for 240 miles. M.T. drivers all smiles — then Ferfer on the borders of Abysinnia and Italian Somaliland, and a road which cannot be suitably described within the limits of polite language. Gabredarre, Dagabhur, Sassabaneh — the latter inscribed on our hearts and depicted in our grey hairs. Quagmires, or fine floury dust 3 to 4 feet

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## *There will always be an England . . .*

**1815** "They tell me, miller, you're going to have one of those newfangled windmills." "Aye, parson", said Sam Eldridge ; "it's no good going on wi" me old contraption. I can't manage all the grist they brings me. A windmill it's got to be, and there bain't no place to put 'im except up on the Down where there's some wind. I'm sorry, sir, if it's going to jigger up your view of the Downs, but —"

deep in places, rocks and holes, tracks wandering in indescribable confusion through the foothills and scrub bush. A nightmare of a journey. Some transport actually circled back on itself and after 60 miles found itself near where it started from. One recollects a one tonner passing, and several hours later repassing, a cheery shout from the driver announcing the "This is my second time round." It all sounds very foolish, but to those who experienced the heat, the dense clouds of choking dust, the broken and bushy country, multiplicity of tracks leading to all points of the compass, through hundreds of miles of waterless and uninhabited country, getting lost was just no trouble at all. Then in the words of Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer "Came the Rains". Even at this date our troubles are too painful to relive, and suffice it to say that in due course Giggiga was reached.

Traversing the broken and bush covered terrain over a fair road from Giggiga brought us to Harar "The City of beautiful women". The walled town is reputed to be 4000 years old, and is said to have been mentioned in the Bible. Save for the matter of age, its other claims are entirely without foundation. Its narrow winding streets, the filth of centuries on its walls, the clouds of flies, the smells and teeming unwashed, and often diseased, inhabitants left an unforgettable impression. One entered the Walled City under permit, but there were not many second applications.

Nights spent outside the Walled City, with the howling of bands of pariah dogs and the usual accompaniment of our constant attendants, the Hyaenas, were anything but restful. Rifle fire started at sundown and maintained sporadic outbursts throughout the night, as Banda, Abysinnian and Somali worked off a few old scores.

At Harar, as at most towns in enemy territory a high powered Wireless station was in evidence. The principle of wiring was, invariably, "Safety last". A 3500 volt bare wire feed was suitably placed to ensure that the operator in switching on, was in line to secure a rapid trip to the next world. Incidentally at the Addis Ababa Radio station, 100 amps was fed through a cabtyre cable clamped under a screw ! We were not impressed with the enemy Radio equipment. At first appearance, from the panels, a good job, but in reality, and in general layout and wiring, a "Hay wire" Heath Robinson effect was aimed at and secured with great success.

In the nature of the operations Wireless Communications played a large part, and some remarkable results were secured. Distances were covered which were never contemplated by the set designers in their wildest dreams. The co-ordination of force movements over extraordinary distances, resulting from this factor, led in no small measure to the rapidity of advance throughout the campaign.

From Harrar, through Diredaua, Miesso and Adama, some 350 miles of broken and wild country was encountered. The vagaries of Italian permanent line construction were much in evidence, together with their positive aversion to staying requirements. Again, the wire transposition scheme led to the usual

## *There will always be an England . . .*

**1932** "Yes", said Charlie Eldridge, the miller, Sam's grandson, "I were for scrapping the old mill, it's no use to me ; but here's this Society come along, and they say 'twould be a sin to do away with a fine old landmark. It don't seem like sense, but they're going to put 'im in order, and they're going to pay me — well, they're doin' the thing "andsome". "What's all this about these 'ere pylons, Bill ?" asked the blacksmith. "Why, Tom, they wants to give us 'lectric light, and it means they've got to put up big tower things to carry the wires, and some of these London folks say it's goin' to spoil the Downs." At that moment there came along a little man in knickerbockers, with a rucksack, a straggling beard and glasses. "I have been looking at your lovely Downs for my Society", he began ; "we are putting up a very strong protest about carrying a line of pylons right across, and I hope —"

toss up whether the pair was on a flat or on a diagonal.

Addis Ababa ("The New Flower") was entered late one afternoon in rain and mist, the clouds swirling around its heights, and with the heavy gum plantations presenting a gloomy picture.

By this time Italian prisoners and war material had ceased to interest, but a good time was had by all, buying cameras and watches, the supply of which seemed inexhaustible. Cigarettes assumed high values as articles of barter, and the nonsmokers scored. In the early days of the occupation one feels confident that Addis could have been purchased outright as a going concern for 5000 cigarettes!

Then, north to Dessie over a wonderful tarred road. The view from Mussolini pass towards Dessie was an unforgettable sight. The world at ones feet, at a vantage point of 12000 feet elevation. Patchworked with golden corn fields, one looked across plains and broken country of vast ranges to the dim horizon. Magnificent, and on a gigantic scale, no description can possibly convey even an approximate picture. Onwards to Combolcia, passing through blasted and wrecked trees, with batteries of enemy guns in situ and shells strewn in all directions — mute witnesses to the Italians' futile efforts to stay the South Africans advance. The drome at Combolcia with its wrecked and burnt out enemy planes, and that unforgettable climb into the clouds along a perfect road which must stand high as a wonderful piece of grading and road construction, and so into Dessie. The campaign nearing its close, with the fall of Abam Alagi and Keren, came the long trek back to Nairobi, through Abysinnia, British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland and the N.F.D. — 2400 miles, — the road scarred vehicles rattled their way back.

As a campaign, the rapidity of movement has never been surpassed and could only have been encompassed by the dogged perseverance of the fighting troops employed, and the almost incredible efforts and work of various technical services in the field. Motor transport traversed country which varied from the perfect road to the impossible — country so difficult that even now it seems unbelievable that such area could be negotiated by anything on wheels. The vast distances, rough country, climate varying from 120 in the shade in Somaliland, to the chilly plateaux and mountains north of Harar, with torrential rains, gave rise to problems of supply and transport of the greatest difficulty.

With other Units employed in this extraordinary campaign, South African Signals can justly claim that they "did their stuff".

With the debunking of the huge Italian army threatening the South we now look to pastures new. As these notes are being written in a blinding duststorm "pastures" seems hardly applicable in a literal sense. Here in the Western Desert we find that "red tabs" are an "open sesame" to many kindnesses and hospitality. It seems that this is in return for hospitality shewn to troops passing through Union ports. So today we have a modern miracle — bread cast upon the waters, returning in the shape of beer!

May Egypt long continue to be a land of miracles, and, "We'll be seein' you!"

## *There will always be an England . . .*

**2034** In the inn the television set was presenting an impassioned appeal by the President of the Society for the Protection of the Countryside." And now I come to the latest proposal made in the name of progress by our modern vandals, who wish to take down the line of graceful early twentieth-century pylons on the Downs. My Society is going to fight this sacrilege with all its power. Although the structures do not serve any practical purpose in these days of radio distribution of power, these fine old creeper-grown monuments of the past stand against the sky as one of a fast diminishing number of relics of an England that is gone, and we propose to buy the ground each pylon stands upon." —

A.L.F.H.

# DIGGER DOINGS...

It didn't look a bit like the desert. We had been used to seeing it mottled with camels and seedy looking donkeys, just visible under tottering loads, wending their way across the flat stretch of bare ground.

And now here were poles gay with streamers, decorated marquees, professional looking roped lanes, Signal flags fluttering round a circular track, a band stand, canteen, score board, competitors' enclosures, and a bevy of officials wearing distinctive armbands designating their specified jobs. The day before, the ground was as Nature and generations of Arabs had made it and the transformation was like the waving of Mandrake's magic hands.




It might have been a gala rendering of the Stawell Gift. Actually it was the scene of a sports meeting held by Australian Corps Signals, whose location was described on the printed programme as being "somewhere in the Middle East".

Headed by a band from an Infantry Battalion, the Unit marched in column of route round the arena and past the saluting base where Lt. Col. S.A. Embling took the salute and judged the sections on their marching. The winners were 3 Line section with 2 Line section second.

Main event of the day was the Gift, a championship event of 100 yards with a prize running into... well we can't exactly say, but there were over fifty entries and that speaks for itself. Six heats excited amazing interest and in the final the winner, Signalman W.M. Mills, a Westralian, just beat Signalman D. Kerrison in 11 2/5 seconds.



The timekeeper, Sgt. (Tubby) Craig, himself a keen sportman, rated it as "mighty fine".

Lads from the unit who were not competing lined the edge of the track and gave their support in wholesale manner but at one stage they suddenly melted away. After all, a fight is always a good show, especially when



it is among a bunch of native water melon sellers. The fact that some of the combatants were women didn't rob the brawl of any bitterness but when cheering boys suddenly saw a burly Wog lift his bludgeon and strike one of the woman across the back they chased him half way to Cairo.

Other good individual performers in events were Signalman T. Evans, who won both the High and Broad Jumps in classic style with 5ft. 2 ins. and 17 1/2 feet, and Signalman R. Madden who put a 16 lb shot 32 feet.

Two events with special significance were the Helio race and the Pole Crossing team event. Cpl. Godfrey of 2 Company gained the honours in the Helio, setting his instrument up in 1 min. 42 secs. After a great tussle 3 Line section erected their crossing in 3 seconds less than 5 Line section in 2 minutes 27 seconds.

In the team events 3 Line section were outstanding as they won all events and throughout showed a wonderful willingness to pull together. The meeting was an outstanding success largely due to the brilliant organisation of the Sports Officer, Lt. W. Scalley, and the creative ability and imagination of his secretary, Sgt Alan Williams.

But a word of warning. Nobody, please, ask Sgt Jack Kingdon what happened to the little enclosure he erected on the far side of the ground. I will not be responsible for the consequences.

(These were the Prize winners :—)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Grand March | 1st | 3 Line | Section. |
| GIFT | 1st | Sigmn | Mills. |
| | 2nd | ,, | Kerrison. |
| | 3rd | ,, | Hughes. |

100 yards championship

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| High Jump | 1st | ,, | Evans. |
| | 2nd | ,, | O'Donohue. |
| Egg and Spoon race | 1st | ,, | Delaney. |
| | 2nd | Sgt | Costolloe. |

200 yards championship

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kendal Welter | 1st | Sigmn | Newman. |
| | 2nd | ,, | Heaton. |
| | 3rd | ,, | Mills. |
| Heliograph comptn. | 1st | Cpl | Godfrey. |
| | 2nd | Sigmn | Vinning. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Broad Jump | 1st | Sigmn | Evans. |
| | 2nd | ,, | O'Donohue |
| Polo Crossing | 1st | 3 Line | Section. |
| | 2nd | 5 Line | Section. |
| Shot Putt | 1st | Sigmn | Madden. |
| | 2nd | ,, | Sayers. |

440 yards championshp.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Simpson Stakes | 1st | Pte | Davies. |
| | 2nd | Sigmn | Davidson. |
| | 3rd | ,, | Owen. |
| Tug of War | Wnr. No. 1 Coy. | | |

880 yards

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chardon Chmpshp. | 1st | Sigmn | Sinclair. |
| | 2nd | ,, | Pullen. |
| | 3rd | ,, | Rouse. |
| Relay Race | Wnr. 3 Line Section | | |

# *Won't you tell me, George?*

How did this universal use of the name George first start ? Last War our predecessors earned for themselves the world famous name of Digger. About the origin of that I am not very sure either, but still less do I know of the origin of George.

Its use seems to have sprung up since the arrival of the Australian Divisions in the Middle East. Now every soldier, Officer and OR, is George to every native inhabitant from Capuzzo to Alleppo, and every native inhabitant answers — well, perhaps he does not always answer — to the same universal pseudonym. Most things start somehow, sometime, somewhere.

If I walk into a shop I call the shopkeeper George. The shoe shine expert bawls George at me and my cobbers, and I, politely or otherwise, answer "No George". Waiters, tramconductors, Policemen, native soldiers, they all call me George. The tiniest of lisping tots screeches something I take to be George — why ?

It isn't my name at all. Won't somebody tell me ?

# The Murder of Captain George "Doonott" Blamey.

CHAPTER V.

## THE FIRST LINK.

Bellew dressed hurriedly following the report of the discovery of Haggar's body. Reveille had not yet sounded, and he hoped, as he adjusted the final button, to find a clear field for his preliminary investigation. He was fortunate in that respect for the dazed sentry had gone straight to Bellew, leaving the picquet-commander and the remaining sentries blissfully dreaming of cloudy English June skies, love and gammon rashers, and the pubs round Waterloo.

The sentry's agitated story was quickly confirmed. Haggar had without doubt been struck, just behind the right ear low down at the base of the skull, with a sock full of wet sand. He was quite dead. A careful examination of the slit-trench and its immediate surrounds yielded nothing beyond the weapon itself, but this, though an issue and not new, might produce evidence enough to trace its owner. A search of Haggar's pockets yielded nothing of value. A couple of number-nines, an aspirin or two, a few private letters and a nominal roll of N.C.O's and men apparently due for inoculation. This Bellew half-absent-mindedly retained, and then quickly summoned the picquet-commander, the ambulance, the Medical Officer, the Duty Officer, the Orderly Officer, the Orderly Sergeant, the G.S.M., the R.S.M., the Duty Driver and the Duty Clerk, and with the gathering of the people that mattered went off to wire the A.P.M., Area Headquarters, the Civil Police, G.H.Q., the D.A.M.S. and the C.O.M.E.

Then a shave, a shampoo and a shower quickly restored him to his normal alert self, and an excellent breakfast of Force, fish-cakes and fried eggs taken with the early Signal Office relief put him in fine fettle for the obviously difficult day which lay ahead.

***

1. Was this the act of a castor-oil-ridden number-nine addict driven frantic by the thought of his "Attend A — 3 days", which treatment Haggar would administer, or was there a connection between this and Blamey's murder ?

2. Socks, worsted, pairs, one-half. Whose ?

This latter query, thought Bellew, seemed the immediate one to follow up. Yet he could hardly go round smelling the socks of the 500 odd men in the unit, let alone those of the adjacent depot which also came within Haggar's orb ! What, then, of a parade ?

The great "Sock Parade" of '41 will long be remembered in the annalls of Signals. For once, perhaps, "no exemptions" was the letter of the law. Some 500 gallant soldiers paraded on that lovely Egyptian summer morning little knowing the ordeal awaiting them. Bellew's idea was simplicity itself. Every warrant officer, N.C.O. and man would sniff the murderous half-hose, and would answer the simple question — "Are these your bed-mate's ?" The two available ambulances were standing-by. All men with first-aid experience were detailed to stand-to. The Medical Officer, with nose-mask, stood near.

The C.O. was at a conference.

There is no need to dilate on the many reactions that followed the "great sniff". Strong men wilted. Stronger men fainted. The M.O. left in an ambulance. And all to no avail. Every man accused his neighbour.

It was Sergeant-Major Donague who brought boon to B.B.B's disappointed heart some little while after the dismissal of the parade. Almost furtively he approached, and in almost a whisper said, "The R.S.M., the G.S.M. and the R.Q. shleep in the shame tent. I would suggest, shir, that you shniffed therein." Bellew entered therein and "shniffed". A paler though happier Bellew emerged a few minutes later. He had found the owner of that evil-smelling foot-appendage, but — he

had yet to prove that its owner was indeed the killer. May it not have been purloined for the very purpose of casting suspicion on its unfortunate owner ? Yet some latent reluctant suspicions began to crystallise in the too-open mind of Bertram Basingstoke-Bellew.

## Chapter VI.

### A Step Nearer ?

Bellew had to wait till the seventy-ninth of the seventy-nine sick had walked briskly away with seven days E.D. before he could approach the M.O. He was given 10 days sick leave before he made his status and purpose known, and such was the personality of the "Doc" that he found himself sipping a castor-oil cocktail during the brief period of his questioning.

"Poisons ?", repeated the Doc. "No, we've a few of the commoner ones, but there's no cyanide of potassium knocking about the place. But wait a jiff ; that fellow House whom I relieved used to experiment on pie-dogs and Naafi wallads. I believe I did see a few odd bottles in that cupboard outside. Let's look."

A jumbled assortment of dusty smallish bottles was discovered in a small wall-cupboard in the next room. A few acids and alkilis, a poison or two, and several bottles labelled "Specimen of typical Egyptian lung-deposit", "Blood specimen of Naafi wallad suffering from catalepsy, cretinism and cystisis", "Portion of a dead adjutant's cerebellum", etc. And there at the back of this miscellaneous collection was one clearly labelled "Cyanide of Potassium". Clean and bright, not a mark thereon and only too obviously but recently used. "Thanks, Doc." said Bellew, "That's one little problem settled."

He was about to depart when he remembered the nominal roll he had found in Haggar's pocket. "Any idea, Doc. why Haggar should be carrying this about ?" ; he asked. The Doc studied the list of names for a moment, and then said, "I jabbed these blighters a month ago. I remember Haggar saying he couldn't understand why Dickson brought it up and asked him to fix a date for me to do 'em. And that reminds me ; Haggar did say he wanted to see you about something." "Thanks again, Doc." said Bellew, "You've helped me enormously." And unwrapping the bandages which the M.O. had absent-mindedly placed around his knees, Bellew hurried off to his next interview.

* * *

Lieut. (T.M.O.) R. Stellar was in an expansive and almost jovial mood. Only 97 trucks had had to be drawn that morning and re-issued, but eight wireless sets were awaiting modification, and with only 3000 ft. run of timber available from Ordnance his carpenter also had had a slack day. "Come in, lad", he said, as Bellew timidly knocked at his office door. Bellew quickly suppressed any sign of astonishment, and went straight to the point. "I want you, Sir," he said, "To try and recollect anyone you saw when you were tinkering with that truck at about the time the adjutant was killed. Now, sir, didn't you see *anyone* about ?". "Good gawd", said Stellar, "Why didn't you ask me before ? Dickson came over and chatted and jokingly asked me if I could make that truck back-fire again a couple of times. I told him I was darned-well trying to stop it creating, and he laughed and wandered off. But surely you don't think..." "No, no, sir. But I do wish you had told me yesterday. Anyway, many thanks. You saw no-one else ?" "No-one else, I'm afraid", said Stellar. "Have you a cigarette ?", he added. "Thanks".

A very thoughtful Bellew walked over to the Officers Mess. He wanted to check up on Feeler's or any other officer's recollections of any person seen about at the time. Entering via the kitchen he was amazed to see half-a-dozen succulent ducks turning a delicate brown in the mess ovens, while the additional sight of fresh green peas and new potatoes brought a flood of gastric juices to Bellew's mouth. The excellent soles already in the pan reminded him of the "Kursall" at Southend, and the aroma of the maigre simmering on the hob brought tears of remembrance of former happier days. On entering the ante-room a

despondent Feeler met his eyes. Some six or seven young subalterns were chirrupping "Cheerio, Charles", as they smacked their lips over a Tennant's Ale, while one kept crying "Who gave him the Queen of Spades !" Bellew decided that the moment was hardly one for questioning, and suddenly decided to run into town and pay a visit to the Signal Office.

Bellew's first impression on entering the signal office was of a state of utter chaos. To his bemused mind it seemed that hundreds of counter-clerks, despatch-riders, orderlies and checks, operators wireless, operators telegraph, operators telephone and operators teleprinter together with a sprinkling of N.F.R's were hounding to death a poor wretch known as the "superintendent", who with glazed eyes and a telephone-receiver glued to his ears stood stiffly at the salute while he ejaculated into the mouthpiece a series of "Yes sirs", "No sirs" ; "Certainly sirs", as "X" Branch, "Y" Branch and "G" demanded priority routes to their wives and whatnots. From an adjacent room Bellew heard a soft cooing. "Ah ; the carrier-pigeons", he thought, and, knocking softly, he entered the holy of holies — the Signal Masters' Office. The cooing ceased abruptly as the lady-clerks bent again to their work. Surrounded by five telephones and piles of Naafi tea-trays Captain Autumn and his assistant, Lieut. (C for Cecil) Childs, looked up frowningly as Bellew entered. "Excuse me butting in, boys", said Bellew, and was surprised when Childs answered "That's alright, old man. Have a manikin." Autumn, however, was livid. "Haven't I already told you....", he commenced, but Bellew quickly interrupted with "Alright, sir, I have learned all I want to know." And with a quick glance at two pairs of elegant knees Bellew departed.

Bellew's next visit was to Sturgeon's department. He wanted to check-up on the telegram re the Chooser. A bland Sturgeon quickly answered his queries. "Hearing of Blamey's death", he said, "I didn't bother to correct that telegram. "Chooser" should have read "Boozer" you know. Anyway, what does it matter ? Have you tried the sausage and mashed at Tommy's ? Jolly good, you know. And don't forget Tommy Handley's on tonight. And look ; you must see "Gone With the Wind". Bellew beat a hurried retreat. "For Chooser read Boozer", he mused, as he shot down via the stairs from the sixth floor. "I knew that would be a false scent. No doubt some-one was giving Blamey the tip about Captain Rhong's arrival. But heaven keep me from Muddle East." Brigadiers and Colonels, G.S.O's I, G.S.O's II and G.S.O's III, Staff Captains with arm-bands of every conceivable variety of colours were seen on every floor, while the dazzling beauty of the multitudinous ladies within and without uniform would, he thought, be unsurpassed at a royal levée.

Those last four interviews had confirmed Bellew's suspicions. He now knew the murderer. His evidence was complete. That night, he decided, would see his case closed. It was not without a pardonable feeling of exultation that L/Cpl. Bertram Basingstoke-Bellew hurried back to camp for his final interview.

## Chapter VII.

### Conclusion.

Very few members remained in the Sergeants' Mess when Bellew entered that night. The R.S.M. wore that expectant look peculiar to all R.S.M's and willingly agreed to join Bellew in a "pint top". With the retirement of the waiter, a comfortable relaxation into their chairs, and a "Cheerio, sir", Bellew quietly asked, "Why did you kill them, Mr. Dickson ?". "Because", answered the R.S.M., "....What the hell do you mean !" "Three things let you down, sir. Firstly your absent-minded throwing away of your cigar-butt. Secondly you counted on Mr. Stellar's well-known concentration on his work and his forgetfulness in things around him when he is, as always, busy. Thirdly, sir, you forgot your feet. Your plan to murder Captain Blamey was simplicity itself, but like all so-called clever murderers you elaborated. There was no

need to have blown out his brains after you had successfully poisoned him, and although Haggar's story might have been awkward, he had no proof that you had taken a quantity of poison from that cupboard. Let me summarise your actions, sir. For better or for worse you had decided to kill your Adjutant. You knew that the former M.O., Captain House, kept a cupboard of queer things, and you therefore hoped to find a suitable poison with which to do the deed. How to obtain access to that cupboard ? You went to Haggar with a fictious roll of men due for inoculation. While Haggar was checking up on their dates in the next room, you opened House's old cupboard and quickly poured out a small quantity of cyanide of potassium, rather foolishly wiping clean the bottle in which you found it. Haggar returned and told you that there must be some mistake as these men had already been done, and you apologized and departed. You knew that most of the officers had brought to them by their batmen a cup of tea around 5.0 o'clock, and you watched and waited till Captain Blamey's batman had taken in his cup. You know that all officers awaken about that hour, after their strenuous mornings, somewhat lethargic. You slipped into the adjutant's tent and quickly added the poison to his cup of tea, knowing that he would swallow it ere he was fully awake. Doubtless if you had known of the cook's almond-essence you would have left well alone, but hearing Mr. Stellar and the truck back-firing you had what *you* considered a brain-wave. You returned to Blamey's tent and with his revolver blew out his brains. But you forgot that he was already dead, and that the post-mortem would bring that fact to light. No doubt my astuteness in smelling his almost-empty tea-cup shook you somewhat, and I rather admire the way you have quietly kept in the background. But you forgot that cigar-butt you dropped in Blamey's tent. Possibly you thought it an added pointer to Lieut. Stellar, knowing that he also smoked such vile things, but, if you did, you again forget his missing teeth. He sucks. You bite. The marks are very obvious. And then the next morning you heard, probably through the corporal i/c the sick parade, that Haggar had said to the M.O. that he wished to see me. Immediately you became frightened, though at the time, both Haggar and I were too busy to make contact. You then lost your head. You waited for Haggar to leave the canteen. You socked him a beauty. But you forget the sock. That, sir, is my case, and for poor Haggars's sake I must ask you to consider yourself under arrest."

"Excellent !" Dickson had listened quietly without interruption to Bellew's brilliant summing-up. "What charges, may I ask, will you bring against me?"

***

It is an undisputed fact that the justice of a British Army Court Martial is the finest in the world, but, never the less, it is without doubt that the speech for the defence which Lieut. (T.M.O.) R. Stellar made as the Prisoner's Friend went a long way in influencing the finding of the Court. From the charges preferred against Dickson most people were of the opinion that, at the very least, he would be shot twice and then spend the rest of his life in penal servitude, but, as so often happens, the critics were confounded.

Regimental Sergeant-Major M.N.J. Dickson was charged as follows :—

1. Army Act Sect. 24 (1) Whilst on active service — Being concerned in making away with a member of His Majesty's Forces by the administration of poisons contrary to Regulations of the Medical Services of the Army, thereby usurping the privileges of a Medical Officer.
2. Army Act Sect. 6 (3) (*a*) Whilst on active service — By discharging firearms intentionally, negligently occasioning false alarms in the field, i.e. unnecessarily firing at a useless article.
3. Army Act Sect. 24 (4) Whilst on active service — Wilfully injuring government property in that he did render unserviceable.
   (*a*) One cerebrum, adjutant's. — Value one shilling and fourpence-halfpenny (less $12^1/_2\%$ D.E.)
   (*b*) One Tent E.P.I.P. — Value £. 49.19.11 (Bullet hole).

4. Army Act Sect. 18 (2) Whilst on active service — Wilfully maiming a person subject to military law with intent thereby to render him unfit for service in that he did strike a comrade on the head with a sock worsted containing sand.
5. Army Act Sect. 40 Whilst on active service — Conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline in that he did (1) deposit rubbish in a slit trench : viz. the body of a dead lance-corporal.
(ii) fail to report an unusual occurence.

The details of the court-martial have already been fully chronicled in the local press, together with a verbatim report of Stellar's nine-hour speech, so it will suffice to state that not only was Dickson found "not guilty" on all charges, but the president of the court, on awakening, recommended the immediate award to the accused of the M.B.B., stating that far from being a malefactor Dickson was was undoubtedly a benefactor and that he (the president) would forward Dickson's name to the proper authorities (through the usual channels) with a view to obtaining some concrete recognition of his noble act. The finding was received with acclamation by all, and even Bellew somewhat ruefully agreed that perhaps Dickson had acted for the best. ("But why", he cogitated, "Aren't we taught to make out a charge correctly.")

Thus ended Bertram Basingstoke-Bellew's first case, and he bade a reluctant farewell to Signals as he departed to resume his former Berka Patrol.

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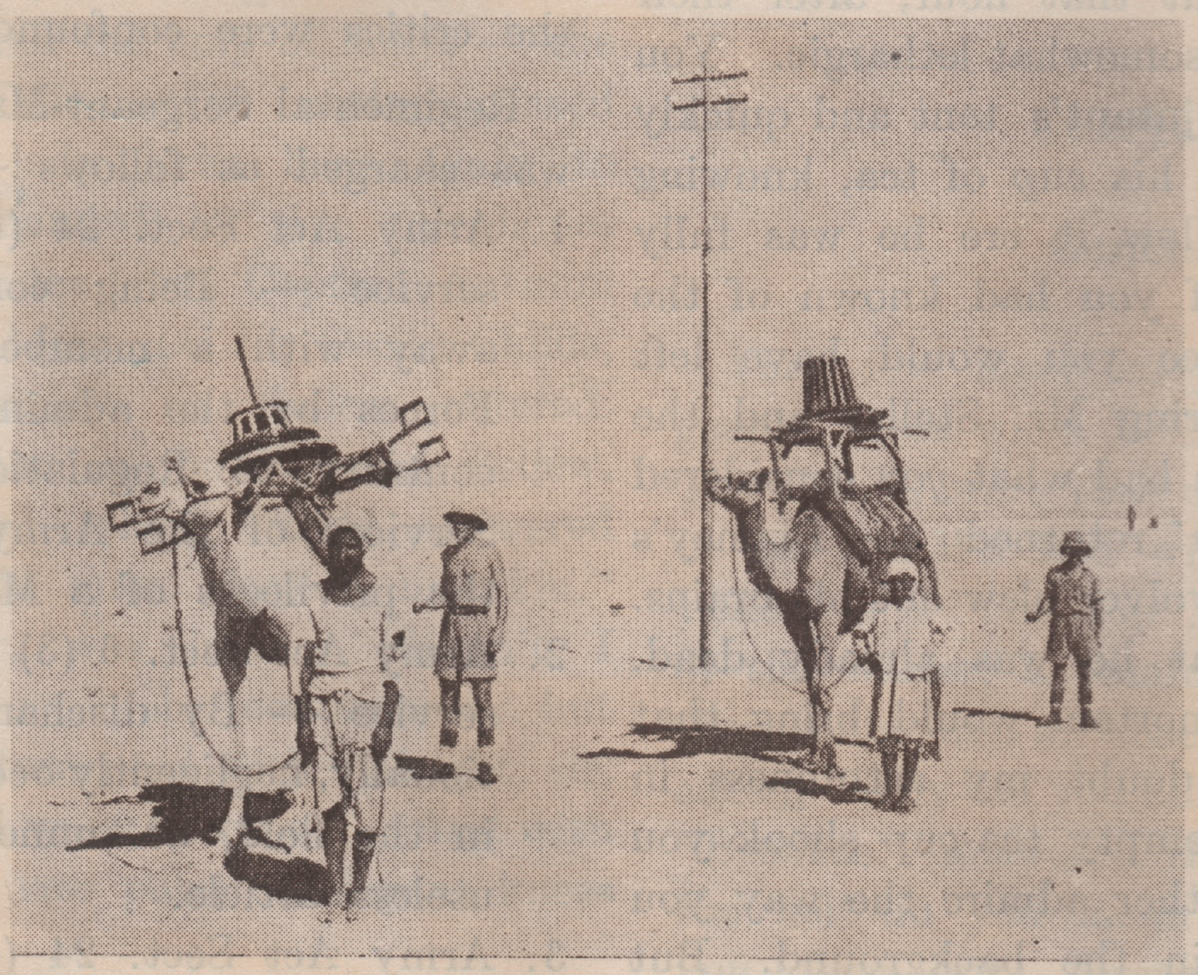
Lieut. (Q.M.) M.N.J. Dickson, M.B.B., R. Signals, is ever willing to admit that but for Bellew's brilliant efforts his (Dickson's) services might well never have been recognised.

(The End)

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# DRUMS, CAMEL, MK 1.

If "Necessity" be admitted as the Mother of Invention, "Laziness" must surely be recognised as the Father of the Child. Whatever the motive or the ancestory, here is a novel improvisation which has saved much of the drudgery of dragging wires across hot sand, and lessened the danger of "kinking" the wires in the process.



Constructed entirely from locally obtained products and standard stores items, the principle working parts comprise :—

Camels 1. (complete with walad)

Drums Barrow 1. (less wheels)

and a fair amount of string and local bambooery. Admitedly the contraption on the right looks top-heavy and in danger of turning the beast onto its back, but that was adjusted shortly afterwards and the "Sleet" lowered down on to the hump. It was suggested that the whole outfit be "underslung" — but there were practical difficulties !

Patent rights have been waived in the interests of the Service and the results obtained have been satisfactory ; a word of warning, however, to would-be-employers — the upkeep costs include 9 gallons of water a day — oh yes — and a handful of beans for "ye walad" !

# *This England...*





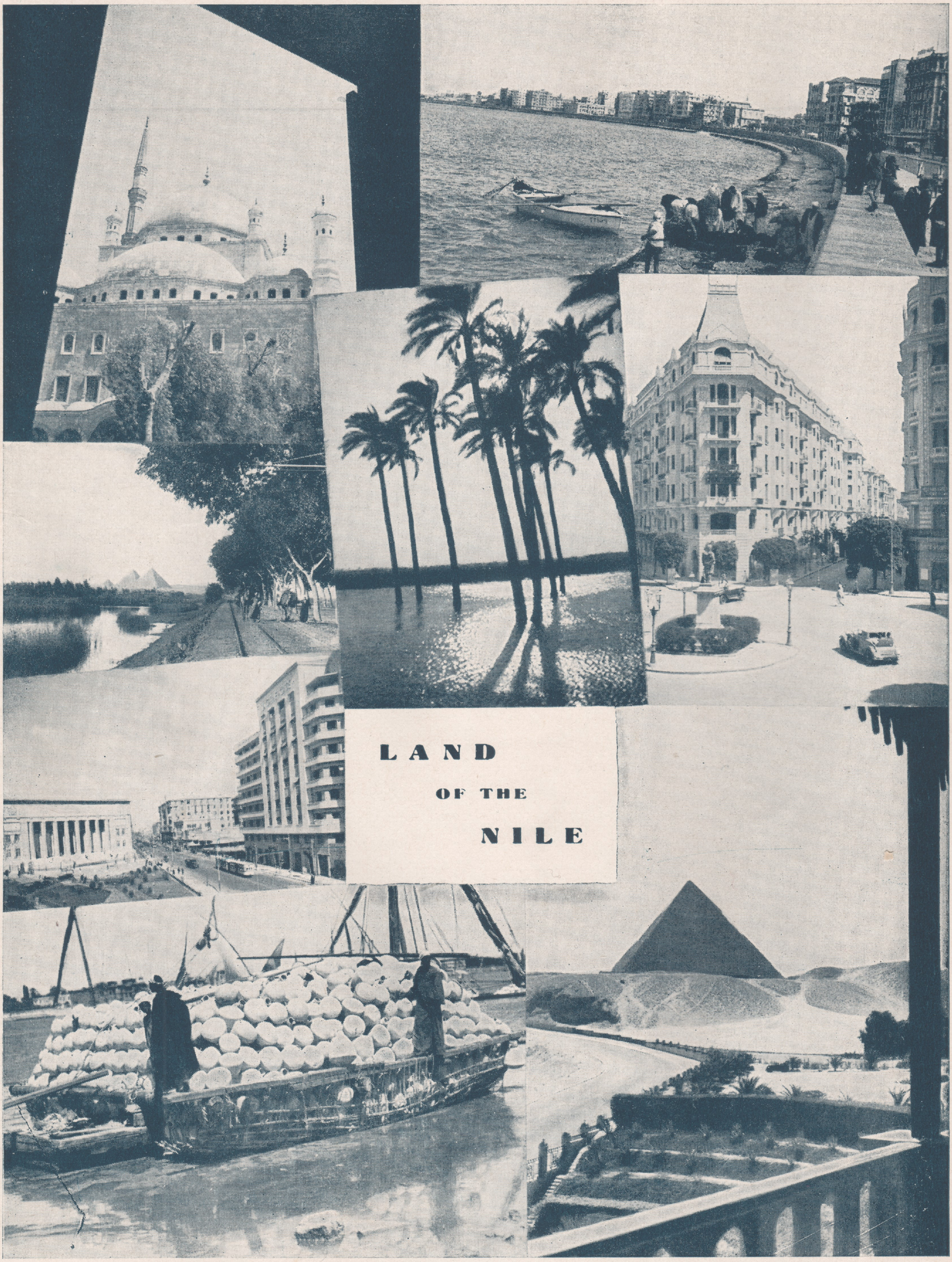












# LAND OF THE NILE

# *An Experiment in Combustion.*

Major W. had an idea. Epidermically speaking he is a regular rash of ideas so this in itself wasn't unusual, but this was a wizard idea and so was at once promoted to the Mark 100 Star class. All ideas have a start line. Newton was batted on the head by an apple and once the law of gravity was known it immediately became fatal for anyone to step off the wrong edge of a precipice. How many suicides can't be laid at the doorstep of Newton's apple can't be conjectured, which shows how dangerous ideas can be. You or I would have said "Ah, an apple. Good O" and would have eaten it, but not Newton. Oh no. He must immediately set to work and make a law out of it. By calling it Gravity I admit that he as good as tied a label "poison not to be taken" round it but there's no doubt there are many people now walking the old asbestos duckboards or twanging harps on fleecy clouds who wouldn't be if the law hadn't been invented. And look how dangerous it has made flying. However, as I was saying, Major W. had an idea. A good idea, one with far reaching possibilities even if the end cannot yet be seen. It's to provide a means of destroying "Secret Documents" toot sweet, pronto and to may be. This being a war of movement it's on the cards that you'll be called on at any tick of the clock to destroy your more incriminating love letters, Cairo postcards, and unpaid Mess bills, and when I say destroy I mean completely, irrevocably and with no twelve baskets of fragments remaining. How to do this with a "rattle" of Panzer wagons knocking at the gates has been a constant worry to those of us who can sport the insignie for Dunkirk, Greece or Crete, and so Major W.'s idea deserves to be fostered.

Like all truly great ideas it is remarkably simple, and the necessary apparatus can be obtained from all QM Stores. That's if you can get anything out of your Q Store.

Enumerating — this is what you should req. for :—

1 Boxes, stationery
1 Bomb, incendiary
1 Sheet, large, asbestos
1 Assortment Bumf, Army

and sufficient optimism and a lot of enthusiasm. There will be no difficulty in obtaining Item 4 and guncotton should not be substituted for Item 3. The Major W. Secret Document Destructor (Destructors S.D. "Major W.") was given its first gallop on the afternoon of Sept 24 on the first day of Ramadan and was watched by all who decided that this was a good enough excuse for being away from work. In the inventor's presence and at the request of the Inventions Board, sleeves were searched for white rabbits, skeleton keys, and enemy agents. The boxes stationery was then severely photographed and got ready. Sensing that something was now about to happen, the onlookers withdrew to points of vantage some three or four hundred yards distant and the inventor, with the air of a Bradman seeing where the field is placed, approached his infernal machine and prodded it sharply in the stomach. The Board of Control promptly threw itself flat and nothing else happened. More prods with the same result and at last it seemed better to leave Excalibur concealed there among the many knotted water flags that whistled dry about the marge. Stiff and dry I think. Anyhow that's how we felt.

Ignoring the B of C's suggestion that the Destructors S D be dropped down a well, the inventor sent for another Bombs Incendiary and replaced the dud. This time he gave it the works and smoke immediately issued from the orifice in front of the D S D. Smoke, then flames, real wizard flames and all looked like a dead cert that he'd collect the insurance money. Proudly watching as the Bombs Incendiary did its stuff, the Major lit a cigarette with the sang-froidest nonchalance imaginable and when after four minutes thirtyfive by the most reliable stop-watch had elapsed,

ordered the opening of his incinerator. When the smoke had cleared the contents was removed. It was found, to the gratifications of all present, that all the Bumf Army Assorted had been true to the highest traditions of the British race on which no son of a gun ever sits and was virgo intacta, smoked and no more frayed at the edges than Marie Lloyd's petticoats, but the Bomb was completely englutted, destroyed, and rendered harmless.

For this new contribution to "A means of dealing with Bombs Incendiary" Major W. has been warmly mentioned in despatches.

---

# *Jungle - Oblique - Tock*

In the jungle, drum talk is understood by all. There is nothing mysterious and inexplicable about it ; it does not savour of black magic, the occult, or the super-natural. The theory, and even the practice, of the "bush telegraph" is simple, and with a little application and considerable practice, anyone, even a white man, if he be sufficiently familiar with the "group language" of his particular region in Africa, can understand and master it in a few years.

Briefly, the tribes making up the Bantu group, for instance, all speak a language consisting not only of sounds but, like the Chinese dialects, of tones and stresses. It is by following these tones and stresses with the drum that the natives, in the course of centuries, evolved and perfected a language which they speak to one another across miles of veldt.

The most common calls are the announcements of visitors coming — the one which mystified me most in the early months of my lone peregrinations of the African bush and jungle ; preparations for a large scale hunt by a village and an invitation to all within hearing to participate ; a beer drink or celebration, or perhaps a full-moon night dance ; a birth or death ; the news of some important occurrence ; or just plain gossip from kraal to kraal by some bored warrior. Then there is the terrible "lombo", the rousing war call, now rarely heard. "Munti ! Muslegas ! Men ! Warriors ! Bring out your spears and guns ! Bring your bows and poison arrows ! The chief calls you !" As that grim message roars its way through the bush, day or night, all men within hearing drop whatever they are doing and hasten away. The hunter leaves his traps and snares, the fishermen his nets, the husbandman his crops. All seize their weapons and answer the call of the drums.

As for speed, a telegraph would ordinarily be little faster. One day as I sat talking with a group of natives, a drum sounded faintly in the distance, a message to all to hide their weapons, for Rhodesian natives are probihited from owning spears or guns ; a policeman and his "askaris" had left the post of Feira that day on his annual tour of the country. Four days later the policeman arrived, a fine young specimen of British manhood. He told me, when I mentioned being forewarned of his coming, that he had started early on the afternoon of the day when I, over a hundred miles distant, had received news of his departure. The message had travelled twenty-five miles an hour. An instance of even greater speed came to my knowledge later. An urgent message was sent well over three hundred miles between sunrise and sunset.

Among the Luban tribes, of a different group than the Bantus, another means of communication is common. One day I was surprised to hear a group of women at their fires whistling back and forth to each other, and was still more surprised to learn that they were talking. They are not allowed to speak while preparing food for their husbands or guests lest they inadvertantly pronounced a curse which might fall upon the food. They have, therefore, as a substitute for speech, perfected the method of conversing by whistles, so varying the Luban type of tones and stresses that they do quite as well as with actual words. Since it has long been

concluded by anthropologists that women are responsible for more inventions and innovations than men, it is perhaps logical to conclude that the Luban men have taken a lesson from their women. They also talk frequently over long distances from hilltops, with whistles.

These instruments are three-toned, — frequently of ivory and often as much as five feet long. Naturally, the tones have a much shorter range than drums. Where great urgency is required over long distances, they often signal with a series of five fires upon an elevation. These they blanket or obscure according to a previously arranged method, thus sending the message as far as men can see.

I happened to participate in one of their communal game hunts in which a large number of warriors surrounded an allotted region and drove the game into pits and nets and into the arrows and spears of waiting killers. Each group leader used a small ivory or bone whistle to direct the drivers.

Each man had his own "whistle name" and the instructions so given were perfectly understood.

And lastly, a story.

One evening after sunset, a drum in another village a few miles up river started pounding faintly, the thrice repeated "trunk line" signal from village to village where the distance is not too great for audibility, "Ivwana nkusa pwile mwanda ; Listen, that I may tell you something." A famous old hunter, named Malingi, went to where the great village drum hung under the council tree, hammered out an acknowledgement to the distant signaller, returned to our group, and sat down.

The other drum then began throbbing. Presently the grave faces of the elders began to light up ; their teeth showed white in the firelight. Suddenly they all burst into laughter, and old Malingi, who was half drunk already on feterita beer, tumbled from his wooden stool and rolled on the ground, howling with laughter at the scandalous gossip retailed across the African night.

"Smoking room" stories are not uncommon in these broadcasts !

# *Some Day*

*FOR I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,*
*Saw the vision of the world and all the wonder that would be;*

*Saw the heavens full with commerce, argosies of magic sails,*
*Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;*

*Heard the heavens full with shouting, and there rained a ghastly dew,*
*From the nations' airy navies grapping in the central blue;*

*Far along the world-wide whisper of the south wind rushing warm,*
*With the standards of the peoples plunging through the thunder-storm;*

*Till the war drums throbbed no longer, and the battle flags were furled*
*In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World.*

*There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,*
*And the kindly Earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.*

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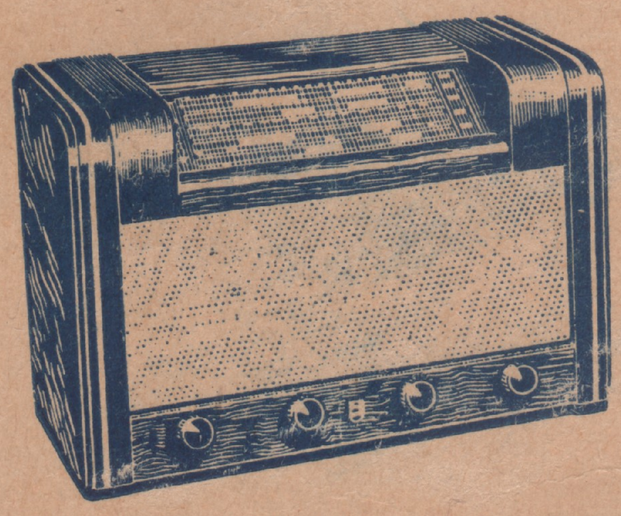


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